

THE WORKS
OF
THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER,

LATE VICAR OF MADELEY.

VOLUME V

CONTAINING
THE LAST CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM, CONCLUDED;
AND PART OF
THE PORTRAIT OF ST. PAUL.

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THE LAST CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM,
CONTINUED.

A

POLEMICAL ESSAY

ON

THE TWIN DOCTRINES

OF

CHRISTIAN IMPERFECTION

AND

A DEATH PURGATORY

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE CHECKS.

“BE ye perfect. Every one that is perfect shall be as his Master. If thou wilt be perfect, go, and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.”—JESUS CHRIST.

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud.”—ST. PAUL.

“Let no man deceive you,” &c. : “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. In him is no sin. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment ; because as he ” (the vine) “is, so are we ” (the branches) “in this world.”—ST. JOHN.

THE
LAST CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM,
CONTINUED.

SECTION VII.

It is easier to raise a dust than to answer an argument: I expect, therefore, that our opponents, instead of solidly answering the contents of the preceding section, will assert, that St. Paul was an avowed enemy to deliverance from lust and evil tempers before death, and, of consequence, a strong opposer of the doctrine of Christian perfection. And to support their assertion, they will probably quote the following text: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v. 17. For, they conclude from these words, that so long as we dwell in bodies of corruptible flesh, we cannot help breaking the law of liberty, at least, from time to time, by sinful internal lusts. As this objection passes among them for unanswerable, it may not be amiss to give it a fourfold answer.

1. St. Paul wrote these words to the carnal, fallen Galatians: to them he said, "So that ye cannot do the things that ye would." And there was a good reason why they could not do what they had a weak desire to do. They were "bewitched" by the flesh, and by carnal teachers, who led them from the power of the Spirit to the weakness of the letter, yea, to the letter of Judaism too. But did he not speak of himself to the Philippians in a very different strain? Did he not declare, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me?" And

cannot every believer, who steadily walks in the Spirit, say the same thing? Who does not see the flaw of this argument? The disobedient, fallen, bewitched believers of Galatia, of whom St. Paul stood in doubt, could not but fulfil the lusts of the flesh, when they were led by the flesh. "Neither hot nor cold," like the Laodiceans, they could neither be perfect Christians, nor perfect worldlings, because they fully sided neither with the Spirit, nor with the flesh; or, to use the apostle's words, "they could not do the things that they would," through the opposition which the flesh made against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, neither of these principles being yet fully victorious in their halting, distracted hearts. Therefore, this must be also the miserable case of all obedient, faithful, established believers through all ages all the world over. What has this antinomian conclusion to do with the scriptural premises? When I assert, that all those who have put out their knees cannot run a race swiftly, do I so much as intimate, that no man can be a swift racer?

2. It is as unscriptural to judge of the power and liberty of established believers by the power and liberty of the Galatians, as it is unreasonable to judge of the liberty of a free nation by the servitude of a half-enslaved people; or of the strength of a vigorous child, by the weakness of an half-formed embryo. I found this remark, (1.) Upon Gal. v. 1, where the apostle indirectly reproves his Judaizing, wrangling converts, for being fallen from "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and for being "entangled again with the yoke of bondage." And, (2.) Upon Gal. iv. 19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." The dawn of day is not more different from the meridian light, than the imperfect state described in this verse is different from the perfect state described in the following lines, which are descriptive of the adult Christian:—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Gal. ii. 20.

3. The sense which is commonly fixed upon the text produced by our opponents is entirely overturned by the context: read the preceding verse, and you will find a glorious, though conditional, promise of the liberty which we plead for: "This I say, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the" sinful "lust of the flesh;" that is, far from harbouring either outward or inward sin, ye shall, with myself and as many as are perfect, steadily keep your "body under," and be in every thing "spiritually-minded," which "is life and peace."

4. We should properly distinguish between the lawful and the sinful lusts or desires of the flesh. To desire to eat, to drink, to sleep, to marry, to rest, to shun pain at proper times and in a proper manner, is no sin: such lusts or desires are not contrary to the law of liberty. Our Lord himself properly indulged most of these harmless propensities of the flesh, without ceasing to be the immaculate Lamb of God. Hence it is, that our church requires us, in our baptism, to renounce only "the sinful lusts of the flesh," giving us a tacit leave lawfully to indulge its lawful appetites. I should be glad, for example, to recruit my strength by one hour's sleep, or by an ounce of food, as well as by a good night's rest, or a good meal; but the flesh harmlessly lusteth against the spirit, so that in these, and in a thousand such instances, "I cannot do the things that I would." But do I commit sin when I use my body according to its nature? Nay, if I were as strongly solicited unlawfully to indulge the lawful appetites of my flesh, as Christ was to turn stones into bread, when he felt keen hunger in the wilderness, and if I as strongly resisted the temptation, would not such a temptation increase the glory of my victory, rather than the number of my sins? Is it right in our opponents to avail themselves of the vague, unfixed meaning of the words "flesh" and "lust," to make the simple believe, that so long as we have human flesh about us, and bodily lusts or appetites within us, our hearts must necessarily remain pregnant with sinful lusts, and we shall "have innumerable lusts," as says an imperfectionist, whom I shall soon mention, "swarming about our

heart?" Does not this doctrine put a worm at the root of Christian liberty, while it nourishes antinomian freedom,—a freedom to sin, even to adultery and murder, without ceasing to be sinless and perfect in Christ?

5. Two lines after St. Paul's supposed plea for the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in believers, the apostle begins a long enumeration of the "works of the flesh, of the which," says he, "I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they" (the fallen believers) "who do such things," or admit in their hearts such lusts as "hatred, variance, strife, or envyings," "shall not inherit the kingdom of God:" whereas "they that are Christ's" (they that "are led by the Spirit of God;" for, in Paul's account, only such are Christ's, that is, properly belong to Christ's spiritual dispensation: see Rom. viii. 9, 14) "have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24. Now, these spiritual believers "can do all things through Christ; and, accordingly, the apostle observes, that, far from bearing the fruit of the flesh, they bear "the fruit of the Spirit," which "is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance,"—the whole cluster of inherent graces which makes up Christian perfection. And then he observes, that "the law is not against such," because they fulfil it; "for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." See Gal. v. 14—23.

6. The sense which the imperfectionists give to Gal. v. 17 is not only flatly contrary to the rest of the chapter, but to the end and design of all the epistle. What the apostle has chiefly in view, through the whole, is to reprove the Galatians for their carnality, in following Judaizing teachers, and in bearing the fruits of the flesh,—"envy, variance," &c., insomuch that they were ready to "bite and devour one another." Now, if when he had sharply reproved them, as persons who "ended in the flesh," after having "begun in the Spirit," he had written Gal. v. 17 in the sense of our opponents, he would fairly have excused these bewitched men, absolutely defeated

his reproof, and absurdly furnished them with an excellent plea to continue in their bad course of life. For, if they could not “fulfil the law of Christ,” but must remain carnal and sold under indwelling sin, had they not a right to answer the apostle thus?—“If neither we, whom thou callest ‘bewitched Galatians,’ nor any spiritual believer, can possibly do the things that we should and would do, because the flesh sinfully and unavoidably lusteth against the Spirit, why dost thou blame us for our carnality? Why dost thou take us to task, rather than other believers? Are we not all bound by adamant chains of carnal necessity to break the law of Christ, so long as we are in the body? Art thou not the very man who givest us to understand, that ‘we cannot do what we’ should and ‘would’ do, because ‘the flesh,’ which we cannot possibly part with before death, ‘lusteth against the Spirit?’ And is not absolute necessity the best excuse in the world?”

7. Should Mr. Hill ask, “What is then the genuine meaning of Gal. v. 17?” we reply, that when we consider that verse in the light of the context, we do not doubt but the sense of it is fairly expressed in the following lines: “The flesh and the Spirit are two contrary principles. ‘They that are in,’ or ‘walk after, the flesh cannot please God.’ And ye are undoubtedly in the flesh, and walk after the flesh, while ‘ye bite and devour one another. This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit; be led by the Spirit; and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh,’ as ye now do. ‘For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and prevails in all carnal people; ‘and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh,’ and prevails in all spiritual people; ‘and these two,’ far from nestling together, as antinomian teachers make you believe, ‘are contrary to each other.’ They are irreconcilable enemies; so that, as obedient, spiritual believers, while they are led by the Spirit, cannot do what they would do if they were led by the flesh; ye bewitched, carnal, disobedient Galatians, who are led by the flesh, cannot do what ye would do if ye were led by the Spirit, and what ye have still some desire to do, so far as ye have not yet absolutely quenched

the Spirit. Would ye then return to your liberty, return to your duty ; change your guide, forsake the carnal mind, let 'Christ be formed in you, be led by the Spirit ;' so shall ye 'fulfil the law of Christ,' and it shall no more condemn you, than the law of Moses binds you. For 'if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under' the curse of 'the law ;' ye are equally free from the bondage of the Mosaic law, and from the condemnation of the law of Christ." Gal. v. 16.

8. Should Mr. Hill say, that by "the flesh" he understands not only "the body," but also the "natural desires, appetites, and aversions," which are necessarily excited in the soul, in consequence of its intimate union with the body ; and that "the body of sin" must needs live and die with the body which our spirit inhabits ; because, so long as we continue in the body, we are unavoidably tried by a variety of situations, passions, inclinations, aversions, and infirmities, which burden us, hinder us from doing and suffering all we could wish to do and to suffer, and occasion our doing or feeling what we should be glad in some respects not to do or feel :—

—I answer, It is excessively wrong to conclude, that all these burdens, infirmities, appetites, passions, and aversions, are those sinful workings of our corrupt nature, which are sometimes called "the flesh." You cannot continue a whole day in deep prostration of body and soul, nor perhaps one hour upon your knees ; your stomach involuntarily rises at the sight of some food which some persons esteem delicious ; your strength fails in outward works ; your spirits are exhausted ; you faint or sleep, when others are active and toil ; you need the spiritual and bodily cordials which others can administer ; perhaps also you are afflicted with disagreeable sensations in the outward man, through the natural necessary play of the various springs which belong to flesh and blood ; your just grief vents itself in tears ; your zeal for God is attended with a proper anger at sin ; nay, misapplying what the apostle says of the carnal man under the law, you may declare with great truth, "The" extensive "good I would, I do not ; and the" accidental "evil I would

not, that I do :” I would convert every sinner, relieve every distressed object, and daily visit every sick bed in the kingdom ; but I cannot do it. I would never try the patience of my friends, never stir up the envy of my rivals, never excite the malice of my enemies ; but I cannot help doing this undesigned evil as often as I strongly exert myself in the discharge of my duty.

If you say, “All these things, or most of them, are quite inconsistent with the perfection you contend for,” I ask, Upon this footing, was not our Lord himself imperfect ? Did his bodily strength never fail in agonizing prayer, or in intense labour ? Did his animal spirits ever move with the same sprightliness ? Do we not read of his sleeping in the ship when his disciples wrestled with a tempestuous sea ? Did he not fulfil the precept, “Be ye angry, and sin not ?” Had he not the troublesome sensations of grief at Lazarus’s grave ? of hunger, in the wilderness ? of weariness, at Jacob’s well ? and of thirst, upon the cross ? If he was “made in the likeness of sinful flesh,” and “tempted in all things as we are,” is it not highly probable that he was not an utter stranger to the other natural appetites and uneasy sensations which are incident to flesh and blood ? Is it a sin to feel them ? Is it not rather a virtue totally to deny them ? or not to gratify them out of the line of duty ? or not to indulge them in an excessive manner on that line ? Again : did not his holy flesh testify a natural, innocent abhorrence to suffering ? Did not his sacred body faint in the garden ? Were not his spirits so depressed that he stood in need of the strengthening assistance of an angel ? Did he do all the good he would ? To suppose that he wished not the conversion of his friends and brethren, is to suppose him totally devoid of natural affection : but were they all converted ? Did you never read, “Neither did his brethren believe in him.” “And his friends went out to lay hold on him ; for they said, He is beside himself ?” To conclude : did he not accidentally stir up the evil he would not when he gave occasion to the envy of the pharisees, the scorn of Herod, the fears of Pilate, the rage of the Jewish mob ? And when he prayed that the bitter cup

might pass from him, if it were possible, did he not manifest a resigned desire to escape pain and shame? If every such desire is indwelling sin, or the flesh sinfully lusting against the spirit, did he not go through the sinful conflict as well as those whom we call "perfect men" in Christ? and, consequently, did he not fall at once from mediatorial, Adamic, and Christian perfection; indwelling sin being equally inconsistent with all these perfections? What true believer does not shudder at the bare supposition? And if our sinless Lord felt the weakness of the flesh harmlessly lusting against the willingness of the spirit, according to his own doctrine, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," is it not evident that the conflict we speak of;—if the spirit maintains its superior, victorious lusting against the flesh, and by that means steadily keeps the flesh in its proper place;—is it not evident, I say, that this conflict is no more inconsistent with Christian perfection, than suffering, agonizing, fainting, crying, and dying, which were the lot of our sinless, perfect Saviour to the last?

If I am not greatly mistaken, the preceding remarks prove, 1. That when our opponents pretend to demonstrate the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers from Gal. v. 17, they wretchedly tear that text from the context, to make it speak a language which St. Paul abhors. 2. That this text, fairly taken together with the context, and the design of the whole epistle, is a proof that obedient, spiritual believers can do what the bewitched Galatians could not do, that is, they can "crucify the flesh with all its affections and lusts," and walk as perfect Christians, who utterly destroy the whole body of sin, and "fulfil the law of Christ." And, 3. That to produce Gal. v. against the doctrine of Christian perfection, is full as absurd as to quote the sermon upon the mount in defence of antinomian delusions. I have dwelt so long upon this head, because I have before me *An Essay on Galatians v. 17*,* lately published by an ingenious divine, who takes it for granted

* The arguments by which the doctrine of the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers till death is supported in that essay will be considered in section xiv.

that the apostle contends, in this verse, for the necessary indwelling of sin.

Mr. Hill will probably say, that he does not rest the doctrine of Christian imperfection so much upon the experience of the fallen Galatians, as upon that of St. Paul himself, who, in Rom. vii., frankly acknowledges, that he was still a "wretched, carnal man, sold under sin, and serving with the flesh the law of sin." Whence it follows, that it is high presumption in modern believers to aspire at more perfection, and greater freedom from sin upon earth, than had been attained by St. Paul, who "was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles, but laboured more abundantly than they all." To this common objection I answer :

1. The perfection we preach is nothing but perfect repentance, perfect faith, and perfect love, productive of the gracious tempers which St. Paul himself describes, 1 Cor. xiii. We see those blessed tempers shining through his epistles, discourses, and conduct ; and I have proved in the preceding section, that he himself professed Christian perfection. This objection, therefore, appears to us an ungenerous attempt to make St. Paul grossly contradict himself. For, what can be more ungenerous than to take advantage of a figurative mode of expression to blast a good man's character, and to traduce him as a slave of his fleshly lusts, a drudge to carnality, a wretch sold under sin ? What would Mr. Hill think of me, if, under the plausible pretence of magnifying God's grace to the chief of sinners, and of proving that there is no deliverance from sin in this life, I made the following speech ?—

"The more we grow in grace, the more clearly we see our sins, and the more willingly we acknowledge them to God and men. This is abundantly verified by the confessions that the most holy men have made of their wickedness. Paul himself, holy Paul, is not ashamed to humble himself for the sins which he committed, even after his conversion. 'I robbed other churches,' says he, 'taking wages of them to do you service.' 2 Cor. xi. 8. Hence it appears, that the apostle had agreed to serve some churches for a proper salary ; but, being 'carnal, and sold

under sin,' he broke his word; he fleeced, but refused to feed, the flocks; and, robbing the churches, he went to the Corinthians, perhaps to see what he could get of them also in the end; for 'the heart is desperately wicked, and deceitful above all things.' Jer. xvii. 9. Nay, partial as he was to those Corinthians for whom he turned church-robber, he showed that his love to them was not sinless and free from rage: for, once he threatened to come to them 'with a rod;' and he gave one of them to 'Satan for the destruction of the flesh.' With great propriety, therefore, did holy Paul say to the last, 'I am the chief of sinners.' And now, when the chief of the apostles abases himself thus before God, and publicly testifies, both by his words and works, that there is no deliverance from sin, no perfection in this life, who can help being frightened at the pharisaic pride of the men who dare inculcate the doctrine of sinless perfection?"

I question if Mr. Hill himself, upon reading this ungenerous and absurd, though in one sense, scriptural plea for St. Paul's imperfection, would not be as much out of conceit with my fictitious explanation of 2 Cor. xi., as I am with his Calvinistic exposition of Rom. vii. Nor do I think it more criminal to represent the apostle as a church-robber, than to traduce him as a "wretched, carnal man, sold under sin;" another Ahab, that is, a man who "did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him."

2. St. Paul no more professes himself actually a carnal man in Rom. vii., than he professes himself actually a liar in Rom. iii. 7, where he says, "But if the truth of God has more abounded through my lie, why am I judged as a sinner?" He no more professes himself a man actually sold under sin, than St. James and his fellow-believers profess themselves a generation of vipers, and actual cursers of men, when the one wrote, and the others read, "The tongue can no man tame; it is full of deadly poison; therewith curse we men." When St. Paul reproves the partiality of some of the Corinthians to this or that preacher, he introduces Apollos and himself; though it seems that his reproof was chiefly intended for

other preachers who fomented a party-spirit in the corrupted church of Corinth. And then he says, "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos, for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written." 1 Cor. iv. 6. By the same figure he says of himself what he might have said of any other man, or of all mankind: "Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass." Thrice in three verses he speaks of his not having charity. And suppose he had done it three hundred times, this would no more have proved, that he was really uncharitable, than his saying, Rom. vii., "I am sold under sin," proves that he "served the law of sin with his body," as a slave is forced to serve the master who bought him.

3. It frequently happens also, that, by a figure of rhetoric which is called "hypotyposis," writers relate things past, or things to come, in the present tense, that their narration may be more lively, and may make a stronger impression. Thus, Gen. vi. 17, we read, "Behold, I, even I, do bring," that is, I will bring one hundred and twenty years hence, "a flood upon the earth, to destroy all flesh." Thus also, 2 Sam. xxii. 1, 35, 48, "When the Lord had delivered David out of the hand of all his enemies, and given him peace in all his borders, he spake the words of this song. He teacheth," that is, he taught, "my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is," that is, was, "broken by mine arms. It is God that avengeth," that is, that hath avenged, "me, and that bringeth," that is, has brought, "me forth from mine enemies." A thousand such expressions, or this figure continued through a thousand verses, would never prove, before unprejudiced persons, that king Saul was alive, and that David was not yet delivered for good out of his bloody hands. Now, if St. Paul, by a similar figure, which he carries through part of a chapter, relates his past experience in the present tense; if the Christian apostle, to humble himself, and to make his description more lively, and the opposition between the bondage of sin and Christian liberty more

striking ; if the apostle, I say, with such a design as this, appears upon the stage of instruction in his old Jewish dress,—a dress this, in which he could serve God day and night, and yet, like another Ahab, breathe threatenings and slaughter against God's children,—and if in this dress he says, “I am carnal, sold under sin,” &c., is it not ridiculous to measure his growth, as an apostle of Christ, by the standard of his stature when he was a Jewish bigot, a fiery zealot, full of good meanings and bad performances ?

4. To take a scripture out of the context is often like taking the stone that binds an arch out of its place. You know not what to make of it. Nay, you may put it to a use quite contrary to that for which it was intended. This our opponents do, when they so take Rom. vii. out of its connexion with Rom. vi. and Rom. viii., as to make it mean the very reverse of what the apostle designed. St. Paul, in Rom. v. and vi., and in the beginning of vii., describes the glorious liberty of the children of God under the Christian dispensation. And, as a skilful painter puts shades in his pictures to heighten the effect of the lights ; so the judicious apostle introduces in the latter part of Rom. vii. a lively description of the domineering power of sin, and of the intolerable burden of guilt ;—a burden this which he had so severely felt, when the convincing Spirit charged sin home upon his conscience, after he had broken his good resolutions ; but especially during the three days of his blindness and fasting at Damascus. Then he groaned, “O wretched man that I am,” &c., hanging night and day between despair and hope, between unbelief and faith, between bondage and freedom, till God brought him into Christian liberty, by the ministry of Ananias. Of this liberty the apostle gives us a farther and fuller account in Rom. viii. Therefore, the description of the man who groans under the galling yoke of sin is brought in merely by contrast, to set off the amazing difference there is between the bondage of sin, and the liberty of gospel holiness ; just as the generals, who entered Rome in triumph, used to make a show of the prince whom they had conquered. On such

occasions, the conqueror rode in a triumphal chariot, crowned with laurel ; while the captive king followed him on foot, loaded with chains, and making, next to the conqueror, the most striking part of the show. Now, if, in a Roman triumph, some of the spectators had taken the chained king on foot, for the victorious general in the chariot, because the one immediately followed the other, they would have been guilty of a mistake, not unlike that of our opponents, who take the carnal Jew, “sold under sin,” and groaning as he goes along, for the Christian believer, who “walks in the Spirit,” exults in the liberty of God’s children, and always triumphs in Christ.

5. To see the propriety of the preceding observation, we need only take notice of the contrariety there is between the bondage of the carnal penitent, described in Rom. vii. 14, &c., and the liberty of the spiritual man, described in the beginning of that very chapter : the one says, “Who shall deliver me ?” Sin revives ; it works in him all manner of concupiscence ; yea, it works death in him : he is “carnal, sold under sin,” forced by his bad habits to do what he is ashamed of, and kept from doing what he sees his duty. “In him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing.” Sin dwelleth in him. How to “perform that which is good he finds not. Though he has a desire to be better, yet still he does not do good : he does evil : “evil is present with him.” His “inward man,” his reason and conscience, approve, yea, “delight in, God’s law,” that is, in that which is right ; but still he does it not ; his good resolutions are no sooner made than they are broken ; for “another law in his members wars against the law of his mind,” that is, his carnal appetites oppose the dictates of his conscience, and “bring him into captivity to the law of sin,” so that, like a poor chained slave, he has just liberty enough to rattle his chains, and to say, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death,” from this complete assemblage of corruption, misery, and death !” Is it not ridiculous to conclude, that, because this groaning slave has now and then a hope of deliverance, and, at times, thanks God through Jesus Christ for that hope, he is actually a par-

taker of the liberty which is thus described in the beginning of the chapter?—"Ye are become dead to the law," the Mosaic dispensation, "that ye should be married to him who is raised from the dead, that," instead of omitting to do good, and doing evil, "we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh," in the state of the carnal man, sold under sin,—a sure proof this that the apostle was no more in that state,—"the motions of sin, which were by the law," abstracted from the gospel promise, "did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the" curse of the moral as well as from the bondage of the Mosaic "law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Rom. vii. 4—6. Immediately after this glorious profession of liberty, the apostle, in his own person, by way of contrast, describes, to the end of the chapter, the poor, lame, sinful obedience of those who "serve God in the oldness of the letter;" so that nothing can be more unreasonable, than to take this description for a description of the obedience of those who "serve God in newness of the spirit." We have therefore, in Rom. vii. 4—6, a strong rampart against the mistake which our opponents build on the rest of the chapter.

6. This mistake will appear still more astonishing, if we read Rom. vi., where the apostle particularly describes the liberty of those who "serve God in newness of the spirit," according to the glorious privileges of the new covenant. Is darkness more contrary to light, than the preceding description of the carnal Jew is to the following description of the spiritual Christian?—"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Note: the carnal Jew, though against his conscience, still "serves the law of sin." Rom. vii. 25. "Now, he that is dead is freed from sin. Reckon ye yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin. Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." Note: the carnal Jew says, "Sin revived, and I died." Rom. vii. 9. But

the spiritual Christian is alive from the dead. "Sin shall not have dominion over you," now you are spiritual. You need not say, "I do the evil that I hate, and the evil I would not, that I do;" "for you are not under the law," under the weak dispensation of the law of Moses, "but under grace," under the powerful, gracious dispensation of Christ. "God be thanked, that," whereas "ye were the servants of sin," when you carnally served God "in the oldness of the letter," ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you;" that is, ye have heartily embraced the gospel of Christ, who gives rest to all that come to him travelling and heavy laden. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. But now being"—carnal, sold under sin, ye serve the law of sin? No; just the reverse—"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Rom. vi. 2—22. Is it possible to reconcile this description of Christian liberty, with the preceding description of Jewish bondage? Can a man at the same time exult in the one, and groan under the other? When our opponents assert it, do they not confound the Mosaic and the Christian dispensation? the workings of the Spirit of bondage, and the workings of the Spirit of adoption? And yet, astonishing! they charge us with confounding law and gospel.

7. We shall see their mistake is a still more glaring light, if we pass to Romans viii., and consider the description which St. Paul continues to give us of the glorious liberty of those who have done with "the oldness of the" Jewish "letter, and serve God in newness of the spirit." The poor Jew, carnally sticking in the letter, is condemned for all he does, if his conscience is awake. But "there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," who are come up to the privileges of the Christian dispensation, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," the power of the quickening Spirit given me and my fellow-believers, under the spiritual

and perfect dispensation of Christ Jesus, "hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law," the letter of the Mosaic dispensation, "could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law," the spiritual obedience which the moral law of Moses, adopted by Christ, requires, "might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For," so far from professing, that I am "carnal and sold under sin," I declare, that "to be carnally-minded is death." Well may, then, the carnal Jew groan, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "But to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. So then they that are in the flesh," that is, carnal, sold under sin, "cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" he is, at best, a disciple of Moses, a poor carnal Jew; and remains still a stranger to the glorious privileges of the Christian dispensation. "But if Christ be in you, the body is dead," weak, and full of the seeds of death, "because of" original "sin; but the spirit is life," strong and full of immortality, "because of" implanted and living "righteousness. For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear," like the poor carnal man, who, through fear and anguish, groans out, "O wretched man that I am!" "But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we," who walk in newness of the Spirit, and please God, we, who have the Spirit of Christ, "cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God," whom we please, "and joint heirs with Christ," through whom we please God. Rom. viii. 1—17.

This glorious liberty, which God's children enjoy in their souls under the perfection of the Christian dispensation, will one day extend to their bodies which are "dead," that is, infirm, and condemned to die, "because of" original "sin;" and with respect to the body only it is that the apostle says, Rom. viii. 23, "We ourselves also, who have the

first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption" of our outward man, "that is, the redemption of our body: for," with respect to the body, whose imperfection is so great a clog to the soul, "we are saved by hope." In the mean time "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Who shall separate us" that love God, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, "from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress," &c., do it? Nay, in all these things, much more in respect of sin and carnal-mindedness, we are "more than conquerors through him that loved us." Rom. viii. 23—37.

And that this abundant victory extends to the destruction of the carnal mind we prove by these words of the context: "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace: because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh" (they that are carnally minded) "cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh," (ye are not carnally minded,) "but in the Spirit," (ye are spiritually minded,) "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." For "where the Spirit of the Lord is," and dwells as a Spirit of adoption, "there is" constant "liberty;" and "if any man hath not that Spirit," or if he hath it only as a "spirit of bondage," to make him groan, "O wretched man!" he may, indeed, be a servant of God in the land of his spiritual captivity, but he is none of Christ's free men. He may serve God "in the oldness of the letter," as a Jew, but he does not serve him "in newness of the Spirit," as a Christian; for, I repeat it, "where the Spirit of Christ is," and dwells according to the fulness of the Christian dispensation, "there is liberty," a glorious liberty, which is the very reverse of the bondage that Mr. Hill pleads for during the term of life. See Romans viii. 14—21.

Whether, therefore, we consider Romans vii., vi., or viii., it appears indubitable that the sense which our opponents fix upon Rom vii. 14, &c., is entirely contrary to the apostle's meaning, to the context, and to the design

of the whole epistle, which is to extol the privileges of those who are Christ's above the privileges of those who are Noah's or Moses's; or, if you please, to extol the privileges of spiritual Christians who serve God "in newness of the Spirit," above the privileges of carnal heathens and Jews, who serve him only "in the oldness of the letter."

SECTION VIII.

IF the sense which our opponents give to Rom. vii. 14 is true, the doctrine of Christian perfection is a dream, and our utmost attainment on earth is St. Paul's apostolic carnality, and involuntary "servitude to the law of sin," with an hopeful prospect of deliverance in a death-purgatory. It is therefore of the utmost importance to establish our exposition of that verse, by answering the arguments which are supposed to favour the antinomian meaning rashly fixed upon that portion of scripture.

FIRST ARGUMENT.—"If St. Paul was not 'carnal and sold under sin' when he wrote to the Romans, why does he say, 'I am carnal?' Could he not have said, 'I was carnal once, but now the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death?' Can you give a good reason why, in Rom. vii. 14, the phrase, 'I am carnal,' must mean, 'I was carnal?' Is it right thus to substitute the past tense for the present?"

ANSWER.—We have already shown that this figurative way of speaking is not uncommon in the scriptures. We grant, however, that we ought not to depart from the literal sense of any phrase without good reasons. Several such, I trust, have already been produced to show the necessity of taking St. Paul's words, "I am carnal," in the sense stated in the preceding section. I shall offer one more remark upon this head, which, if I mistake not, might alone convince the unprejudiced.

The states of all souls may, in general, be reduced to three: 1. That of unawakened sinners, who quietly sleep

in the chains of their sins, and dream of self-righteousness and heaven. 2. That of awakened, uneasy, reluctant sinners, who try in vain to break the galling chains of their sins. And, 3. That of delivered sinners, or victorious believers, who enjoy the liberty of God's children: this last state is described in Rom. vii. 4, 6. The rest of that chapter is judiciously brought in, to show how the unawakened sinner is roused out of his carnal state, and how the awakened sinner is driven to Christ for liberty by the lashing and binding commandment. The apostle shows this by observing, Rom. vii. 7, &c., how the law makes a sinner—or, if you please, made him—pass from the unawakened to the awakened state: “I had not known sin,” says he, “but by the law,” &c. When he had described his unawakened state without the law, and began to describe his awakened state under the law, nothing was more natural than to change the tense: but, having already used the past tense in the description of the first, or the unawakened, state; and having said, “Without the law sin was dead: I was alive without the law once: sin revived, and I died,” &c.; he could no more use that tense when he began to describe the second, or the awakened, state;—I mean the state in which he found himself when the commandment had roused his sleepy conscience, and slain his pharisaic hopes. He was therefore obliged to use another tense; and none, in that case, was fitter than the present: just as if he had said, “When the commandment slew the conceited pharisee in me; when I died to my self-righteous hopes; I did not die without a groan, nor did I pass into the life of God without severe pangs: no; I struggled with earnestness, I complained with bitterness, and the language of my oppressed heart was, “I am carnal, sold under sin,” &c., to the end of the chapter.* It is therefore with the utmost rhetorical propriety that the apostle says, “I am,” and not, “I was, carnal,” &c.

* Some time after I had written this, looking into Dr. Doddridge's Lectures on Divinity, page 451, I was agreeably surprised to find that what that judicious and moderate Calvinist presents as the most plausible sense of Rom. vii. 14, is exactly the sense which I defend in these pages. Take his own words: “St. Paul first represents a man as ignorant of the law, and then insensible of sin; but afterwards becoming

But rhetorical propriety is not theological exactness. David may say, as a poet, "God was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it." But it would be ridiculous to take these expressions in a literal sense. Nor is it much less absurd to assert that St. Paul's words, "I am carnal, sold under sin," are to be understood of Christian and apostolic liberty.

SECOND ARGUMENT.—"St. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'I write not to you as to spiritual men, but as to carnal, even to babes in Christ.' Now, if the Corinthians could be at once holy, and yet carnal, why could not St. Paul be at the same time an eminent apostolic saint, and a carnal, wretched man, 'sold under sin?'"

ANSWER.—1. The Corinthians were by no means established believers in general; for the apostle concludes his last epistle to them, by bidding them examine whether they were in the faith. 2. If St. Paul proved carnal still, and was to continue so till death, with all the body of Christian believers, why did he upbraid the Corinthians with their unavoidable carnality? Why did he wonder at it, and say, "Ye are yet carnal; for, whereas there is among you envying and strife," &c., "are ye not carnal?" Might not these carnal Corinthians have justly replied, "Carnal physician, heal thyself?" 3. In the language of the apostle, "to be carnal," "to be carnally minded," "to walk after the flesh," "not to walk after the Spirit," and "to be in the flesh," are phrases of the same import. This is evident from Rom. vii. 14; viii. 1—9. And he says, directly or indirectly, that to those who are in that state, "there is condemnation:" that they "cannot please God," and that they are in a state of death; because "to be" carnal, or "carnally minded, is death." Rom. viii. 1, 6, 8. Now, if he was carnal himself, does it not follow that he

acquainted with it, and then thrown into a kind of despair by the sentence of death which it denounces, on account of sins he is now conscious of having committed: he then farther shows that even where there is so good a disposition as even to delight in the law, yet the motives are too weak to maintain that uniform tenor of obedience which a good man greatly desires, and which the gospel, by its superior motives and grace, does in fact produce."

could not please God, and that he was in a state of condemnation and death? But how does this agree with the profession which he immediately makes of being “led by the Spirit,” of “walking in the Spirit,” and of “being made free from the law of sin and death,” by “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus?” 4. We do not deny that the remains of the carnal mind still cleave to imperfect Christians; and that when the expression “carnal” is softened and qualified, it may, in a low sense, be applied to such professors as those Corinthians were to whom St. Paul said, “I could not speak to you as to spiritual.” But could not the apostle be yet “spoken to as a spiritual man?” And does he not allow, that, even in the corrupted churches of Corinth and Galatia, there were some truly spiritual men—some adult, perfect Christians? See 1 Cor. xiv. 37, and Gal. vi. 1. 5. When the apostle calls the divided Corinthians “carnal,” he immediately softens the expression, by adding, “babes in Christ.” If, therefore, the word “carnal” is applied to St. Paul in this sense, it must follow that the apostle was but a babe in Christ; and if he was but a babe, is it not as absurd to judge of the growth of adult Christians by his growth, as to measure the stature of a man by that of an infant? 6. And lastly: the man described in Rom. vii. 14, is not only called “carnal,” without any softening, qualifying phrase; but the word “carnal” is immediately heightened by an uncommon expression, “sold under sin;” which is descriptive of the strongest “bondage of corruption.” Thus reason, scripture, and criticism agree to set this argument aside.

THIRD ARGUMENT.—“The carnal man, whose cause we plead, says, Rom. vii. 20, ‘If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me,’ that is, in my unrenewed part; and therefore he might be an eminent apostolic saint, in his renewed part, and a carnal, wretched man, sold under sin, in his unrenewed part.”

ANSWER.—1. The apostle, speaking there as a carnal, and yet awakened, man, who has light enough to see his sinful habits, but not faith and resolution enough to overcome them, his meaning is evidently this: If I, as a

carnal man, do what I, as an awakened man, would not, it is no more I that do it ; that is, I do not do it according to my awakened conscience, for my conscience rises against my conduct ; but it is sin that dwelleth in me ; it is the tyrant sin that has full possession of me, and minds the dictates of my conscience no more, than an inexorable taskmaster minds the cries of an oppressed slave.

2. If the pure love of God was shed abroad in St. Paul's heart, and constrained him, he dwelt in love, and, of consequence, in God : for St. John says, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world." Now, if God dwelt in Paul by his loving Spirit, it becomes our objectors to show, that an indwelling God and indwelling sin are one and the same thing ; or that the apostle had strangely altered his doctrine, when he asked with indignation, "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" For, if indwelling sin, the Belial within, was necessarily to nestle with Christ in St. Paul's heart, and in the hearts of all believers, should not the apostle have rather cried out with admiration, "See how great is the concord between Christ and Belial ! they are inseparable ; they always live in the same heart together ; and nothing ever parted them, but what parts man and wife, that is, death?"

3. If a reluctance to serve the law of sin is a proof that we are holy, as Paul was holy, is there not joy in heaven over the apostolic holiness of most robbers and murderers in the kingdom ? Can they not sooner or later say ?—" 'With my mind,' or conscience, 'I serve the law of God ; but with my flesh, the law of sin : how to perform what is good I find not. I would be honest and loving, if I could be so without denying myself ; but 'I find a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.' " Nor can any thing be stronger upon this head than the words of the inhuman princess, who, being at the point of committing murder, cried out, "My mind," that is, my reason or conscience, "leads me to one thing, but my new, impetuous passion carries me to another against my

will. I see, I approve what is right, but I do what is criminal." *

FOURTH ARGUMENT.—“The man whose experience is described in Rom. vii. is said to ‘delight in the law of God after the inward man,’ and to ‘serve the law of God with the mind:’ therefore he was partaker of apostolic holiness.”

ANSWER.—Does he not also say, “With the flesh I serve the law of sin?” And did not Medea say as much in her way, before she imbrued her hands in innocent blood? What else could she mean, when she cried out, “I see and approve with my mind what is right, though I do what is criminal?” Did not the pharisees, for a time, rejoice in the burning and shining light of John the baptist? And does not an evangelist inform us, that Herod himself heard that man of God *ἡδέως*, “with delight,” and did “many things,” too? Mark vi. 20. But is this a proof, that either Medea, the pharisees, or Herod, had attained apostolic holiness?

FIFTH ARGUMENT.—“The person who describes his unavailing struggles under the power of sin, cries out, at last, ‘Who shall deliver me?’ &c.; and immediately expresses a hope of future deliverance, ‘thanking God for it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ Rom. vii. 24, 25. Does not this show, that the ‘carnal man, sold under sin,’ was a Christian believer, and, of consequence, Paul himself?”

ANSWER.—This shows only, that the man sold under sin, and groaning for evangelical liberty, is supported under his unhappy circumstances by a hope of deliverance; and that, when the law, like a severe schoolmaster, has almost brought him to Jesus Christ,—when he is come to the borders of Canaan, and is not far from the kingdom of God, and the city of refuge,—he begins to look and long earnestly for Christ, and has, at times, comfortable hopes of deliverance through him. He has a faith that desires

* *Sed trahit invitam nova vis, aliudque cupido,
Mens aliud suadet. Video meliora, proboque,
Deteriora sequor.*

OVID.

liberty, but not a faith that obtains it. He has a degree of the faith to be healed, which is mentioned Acts xiv. 9 but he has not yet the actually healing, prevailing faith, which St. John calls "the victory," and which is accompanied with an internal witness, that Christ is formed in our hearts. It is absurd to confound the carnal man, who struggles into Christ and liberty, saying, "Who shall deliver me?" &c., with the spiritual man, who is come to Christ, stands in his redeeming power, and witnesses that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death." The one may say, in his hopeful moments, "I thank God, I shall have the victory, through Jesus Christ;" but the other can say, "I have it now; thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. xv. 57. The one wishes for, and the other enjoys, liberty: the one has ineffectual desires, and the other has victorious habits. Such is the contrast between the carnal penitent described in Rom. vii. 14, and the obedient believer described in Rom. viii. "There is a great difference," says the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, "between good desires and good habits. Many have the one who never attain the other." Many come up to the experience of a carnal penitent, who never attain the experience of an obedient believer. "Many have good desires to subdue sin; and yet, resting in those good desires, sin has always had the dominion over them; with the flesh they have always served the law of sin. "A person sick of a fever may desire to be in health, but that desire is not health itself." Whitefield's Works, vol. iv., page 7. If the Calvinists would do justice to this important distinction, they would soon drop the argument which I answer, and the yoke of carnality which they try to fix upon St. Paul's neck.

SIXTH ARGUMENT.—"You plead hard for the apostle's spirituality: but his own plain confession shows, that he was really carnal, and sold under sin. Does he not say to the Corinthians, that 'there was given him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations' which had been vouchsafed him? 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Now, what could this thorn in the flesh be, but a sinful lust? And what this messenger of Satan, but pride, or immoderate anger? Thrice he besought the Lord, that these plagues might depart from him; but God would not hear him. Indwelling sin was to keep him humble; and if St. Paul stood in need of that remedy, how much more we?"

ANSWER.—1. Indwelling anger keeps us angry, and not meek: indwelling pride keeps us proud, and not humble. The streams answer to the fountain. It is absurd to suppose, that a salt spring will send forth fresh water.

2. You entirely mistake the apostle's meaning. While you try to make him a modest imperfectionist, you inadvertently represent him as an impudent antinomian: for, speaking of his thorn in the flesh, and of the buffeting of Satan's messenger, he calls them his "infirmities," and says, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities." Now, if his infirmities were pride, a wrathful disposition, and a filthy lust, did he not act the part of a filthy antinomian, when he said that he gloried in them? Would not even Paul's carnal man have blushed to speak thus? Far from glorying in his pride, wrath, or indwelling lust, did he not groan, "O wretched man that I am?"

3. The apostle, still speaking of his "thorn in the flesh," and of Satan buffeting him by proxy, and still calling these trials his "infirmities," explains himself further in these words: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in persecutions," &c, "for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong. Christ's strength is made perfect in my weakness." Those infirmities—that thorn in the flesh, that buffeting of Satan—cannot, then, be indwelling sin, or any out-breaking of it; for the devil himself could do no more than to take pleasure in his wickedness; and, in Rom. vii., the carnal penitent himself "delights in the law of God after the inward man," instead of taking pleasure in his indwelling sin.

4. The infirmities in which St. Paul glories and takes pleasure were such as had been given him to keep him humble after his revelations: "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh," &c. 2 Cor. xii. 7. Those infirmities

and that thorn were not, then, indwelling sin ; for indwelling sin was ~~not~~ given him after his visions, seeing it stuck fast in him long before he went to Damascus. It is absurd, therefore, to suppose that God gave him the thorn of indwelling sin afterwards, or, indeed, that he gave it him at all.

5. If Mr. Hill wants to know what we understand by St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh," and by the "messenger of Satan" that buffeted him, we reply, that we understand his bodily infirmities,—the great weakness, and the violent head-ache with which, Tertullian and St. Chrysostom inform us, the apostle was afflicted. The same God who said to Satan concerning Job, "Behold, he is in thine hand, to touch his bone and his flesh, but save his life;" the same God who permitted that adversary to "bind a daughter of Abraham with a spirit of" bodily "infirmity for eighteen years;" the same gracious God, I say, permitted Satan to afflict Paul's body with uncommon pains, and, at times, it seems, with preternatural weakness, which made his appearance and delivery contemptible in the eyes of his adversaries. That this is not a conjecture grounded upon uncertain tradition is evident from the apostle's own words two pages before: "His letters, say they," that buffeted me in the name of Satan, "are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." 2 Cor. x. 10. And soon after, describing these emissaries of the devil, he says, "Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ," to oppose me, and to prejudice you against my ministry. "And no marvel; for Satan himself," who sets them on, "is transformed into an angel of light." 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. But if the "thorn in the flesh" is all one with the buffeting messenger of Satan, St. Paul's meaning is evidently this: God, who suffered the Canaanites to "be scourges in the sides of the Israelites, and thorns in their eyes," Joshua xxiii. 13, has suffered Satan to bruise my heel, while I bruise his head: and that adversary afflicts me thus, by his thorns and pricking briars, that is, by false apostles, who buffet me through malicious misrepresentations, which render me vile in

your sight. This sense is strongly countenanced by these words of Ezekiel: "They shall know that I am the Lord; and there shall be no more a pricking brier to the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them." Ezekiel xxviii. 23, 24.

Both these senses agree with reason and godliness, with the text and the context. Satan immediately pierced the apostle's body with preternatural pain; and, by the malice of false brethren, the opposition of false apostles within the church, and the fierceness of cruel persecutors without, he immediately endeavoured to cast down or destroy the zealous apostle. But Paul walked in the "perfect way;" and we may well say of him, what was said of Job on a similar occasion, "In all this" Paul "sinned not," as appears from his own words in this very epistle: "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." "Our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Without" the church "were fightings, within were fears." We had furious opposition from the heathens "without;" and "within," we feared lest our brethren should be discouraged by the number and violence of our adversaries. "Nevertheless God, who comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us." "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." "For which cause we faint not; but, though our outward man perish" through the thorns in our flesh, and the buffetings of Satan; "yet the inward man is renewed day by day;" it grows stronger and stronger in the Lord. When I see St. Paul bear up with such undaunted fortitude, under the bruising hands of satan's messengers, and the pungent operation of the "thorns in his flesh;" methinks I see the general of the Christians waving the standard of Christian perfection, and crying, "Be followers of me;" be wholly spiritual. "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand," and to witness with me, that, "in all

these things, we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us."

SEVENTH ARGUMENT.—"You extol the apostle too much. He certainly was a carnal man still; for St. Luke informs us, that 'the contention,' *παροξυσμος*, 'was so sharp between' Barnabas and him, 'that they departed one asunder from another.' Acts xv. 39. Now 'charity' & *παροξυνεται*, 'is not provoked,' or 'does not contend.' 'Strife' or contention is one of the 'fruits of the flesh;' and if St. Paul bore that fruit, I do not see why you should scruple to call him a 'carnal, wretched man, sold under sin.'"

ANSWER.—1. Every contention is not sinful. The apostle says himself, "Contend for the faith." "Be angry, and sin not." "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Jesus Christ did not break the law of love, when he "looked round with anger" upon the pharisees; "being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." Nor does Moses charge sin upon God, where he says, "The Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation." If St. Paul had contended in an uncharitable manner, I would directly grant that in that hour he fell from Christian perfection. For we assert, that, as a carnal professor may occasionally cross Jordan, take a turn into the good land, and come back into the wilderness, as the spies did in the days of Joshua; so a spiritual man, who lives in Canaan, may occasionally draw back, and take a turn in the wilderness, especially before he is "strengthened, established," and "settled" under his heavenly vine, in the good land that flows with spiritual milk and honey. But this was not the apostle's case. There is not the least intimation given of his sinning in the affair. "Barnabas," says the historian, "determined to take with them" his own nephew "John Mark; but Paul thought not good to do it," because when they had tried him before, "he went not with them to the work," but "departed from them from Pamphylia." Acts xv. 37, 38. Now, by every rule of reason and scripture, Paul was in the right; for we are to "try the spirits," and lovingly to "beware of men," especially of such men

as have already made us smart by their cowardly fickleness, as "John Mark" had done when he had left the itinerant apostles in the midst of their dangers.

2. With respect to the word *παροξυσμος*, "contention," or "provoking," it is used in a good, as well as in a bad, sense. Thus Hebrews x. 24, we read of *παροξυσμον αγαπης*, "a contention" or "a provoking unto love and good works." And therefore, granting that a grain of partiality to his nephew made Barnabas stretch too much that fine saying, "Charity hopeth all things;" yet, from the circumstances of Barnabas's parting with St. Paul, we have not the least proof that St. Paul stained at all his Christian perfection in the affair.

If the reader properly weighs these answers to the arguments by which our opponents try to stain the character of St. Paul as a spiritual man, he will see, I hope, that the apostle is as much misrepresented by Mr. Hill's doctrine, as Christian perfection is by his Fictitious Creed.

SECTION IX.

MR. HILL'S mistake with respect to St. Paul's supposed carnality is so much the more astonishing, as the apostle's professed spirituality not only clears him, but demonstrates the truth of our doctrine. Having therefore rescued his character from under the feet of those who "tread his honour in the dust," and "sell" his person "under sin" at an antinomian market, I shall retort the argument of our opponents; and, appealing to St. Paul's genuine and undoubted experiences, when he "taught wisdom among the perfect," I shall present the reader with a picture of the perfect Christian drawn at full length. Nor need I inform Mr. Hill, that the misrepresented apostle sits for his own picture before the glass of evangelical sincerity; and that turning spiritual self-painter, with the pencil of "a good conscience," and with colours

mixed by "the Spirit of truth," he draws this admirable portrait from the life :—

"Be followers of me." "This one thing I do; leaving the things that are behind, I press towards the mark for the prize of my heavenly calling," a crown of glory. "Charity is the bond of perfection." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "If I have not charity, I am nothing." And what "charity" or "love" St. Paul had, appears from Christ's words, and from his own. "Greater," that is, more perfect, "love hath no man than this," says our Lord, "that he lay down his life for his friends." Now, this very love Paul had for Christ, for souls, yea, for the souls of his fiercest adversaries, the Jews. Hear him. "The love of Christ constraineth us." "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I long to depart, and to be with Christ." "I count not my life dear unto myself, that I may finish my course with joy." "I am ready not to be bound only, but to die also for the name of the Lord Jesus." "If I be offered up on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." And in the next chapter but one to that in which the apostle is supposed to profess himself actually "sold under sin," he professes "perfect love" to his sworn enemies; even that love by which "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them who walk after the Spirit." Hear him. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I," &c., "could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my kinsmen according to the flesh;" meaning his inexorable, bloody persecutors, the Jews.

Nor was this love of St. Paul like a land-flood: it constantly flowed like a river. This living water sprang up constantly in his soul; witness these words: "Remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." "Of many I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that" they "mind earthly things; for our conversation is in heaven." "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the

world." "I know nothing," that is, no evil, "by," or of, "myself." "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." "Whether we are besides," that is, carried out beyond, "ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober," that is, calm, "it is for your cause;" that is, the love of God and man is the only source of all my tempers. "Giving no offence in anything, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, by pureness, by kindness, by love unfeigned;" "being filled with comfort, and exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." "I will gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved;" a rare instance this of the most perfect love! "We speak before God in Christ: we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I," (see here the destruction of sinful self!) "but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." "As always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. We worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." "Mark them who walk so, as ye have us for an example." "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content; everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to abound and to suffer need; I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." "Teaching every man in all wisdom, that I may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto also I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

This description of the perfect Christian, and of St. Paul, is so exceedingly glorious; and it appears to me such a refutation of the Calvinian mistake which I oppose, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure, and my readers the edification, of seeing the misrepresented apostle give his own lovely picture a few more finishing strokes. "We speak not as pleasing men," says he, "but as pleasing God, who trieth our hearts." "For neither at any time used we flattering words," &c.; "God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others."

“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” “Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls ; labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you.” “The Lord make you abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you.” “Thou hast fully known my manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience.” “I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day.”

When I read this wonderful experience of St. Paul, written by himself, and see his doctrine of Christian perfection so gloriously exemplified in his own tempers and conduct, I am surprised that good men should still confound Saul the Jew with Paul the Christian ; and should take the son of the “earthly Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children,” for the son of “the Jerusalem from above,” which “is free,” and “is the mother of us all,” who “stand in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.” But, upon second thoughts, I wonder no more ; for if those who engross to themselves the title of “catholics” can believe that Christ took his own body in his own fingers, and broke it through the middle, when he took bread, broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is broken for you ;” why cannot those who monopolize the name of “orthodox” among us, believe also that St. Paul spoke without a figure when he said, “I am carnal, sold under sin,” and “brought into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. Brethren, I beseech you be as I am : those things which ye have heard and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you.” Now you have “heard and seen,” that “the evil which I would not, that I do ;” and that “with my flesh I serve the law of sin.” In short, you have heard and seen, that “I am carnal, sold under sin.”

I am not at all surprised that carnal and injudicious

professors should contend for this contradictory doctrine, this flesh-pleasing standard of Calvinian inconsistency and Christian imperfection. But that good and, in other respects, judicious men should so zealously contend for it, appears to me astonishing. They can never design to confound carnal bondage with evangelical liberty, and St. Paul's Christian experience with that of Medea and Mr. Fulsome, in order to countenance gross antinomianism; nor can they take any pleasure in misrepresenting the holy apostle. Why do they then patronize so great a mistake? I answer still, By the same reason which makes pious papists believe that consecrated bread is the real flesh of Christ. Their priests and the pope say so; some figurative expressions of our Lord seem to countenance their saying. We protestants, whom the papists call "carnal reasoners" and "heretics," are of a different sentiment; and should they believe as we do, their humility and orthodoxy would be in danger. Apply this to the present case. Calvinian divines and St. Augustine affirm, that St. Paul humbly spake his present experience when he said, "I am carnal," &c. We who are called "Arminians" and "Perfectionists" think the contrary; and our pious opponents suppose, that if they thought as we do, they should lose their humility and orthodoxy. Their error, therefore, springs chiefly from mistaken fears, and not from a wilful opposition to truth.

Nor is St. Augustine fully for our opponents; we have our part in the bishop of Hippo, as well as they. If he was for them when his controversy with Pelagius had heated him, he was for us when he yet stood upon the scriptural line of moderation. Then he fairly owned, that the man whom the apostle personates in Rom. vii., is *homo sub lege positus ante gratiam*, "a man under the" condemning, irritating "power of the law, who is yet a stranger to the liberty and power of Christ's gospel." Therefore, if Mr. Hill claims St. Augustine the prejudiced controvertist, we claim St. Augustine the unprejudiced father of the church; or rather, setting aside his dubious authority, we continue our appeal to unprejudiced reason and plain scripture.

What I say of St. Augustine may be said of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield. Before he had embraced St. Augustine's mistakes, which are known among us by the name of "Calvinism," he believed, as well as that father, that the disconsolate man who groans, "Who shall deliver me?" is not a possessor, but a seeker, of Christian liberty. To prove it I need only transcribe the latter part of his sermon entitled, "The marks of the new birth:"—

"Thirdly," says he, "I address myself to those who are under the drawings of the Father, and are going through the spirit of bondage; but not finding the marks" of the new birth "before mentioned, are ever crying out," (as the carnal penitent, Rom. vii.,) "Who shall deliver us from the body of this death? Despair not; for, notwithstanding your present trouble, it may be the divine pleasure to give you the kingdom." Hence it appears that Mr. Whitefield did not look upon such mourners as Christian believers, but only as persons who might become such if they earnestly sought. He therefore most judiciously exhorts them to seek till they find. "The grace of God through Jesus Christ," adds he, "is able to deliver you, and give you what you want; even you may receive the Spirit of adoption, the promise of the Father. All things are possible with him; persevere, therefore, in seeking, and determine to find no rest in your spirit till you know and feel that you are thus born again from above, and God's Spirit witnesses with your spirits, that you are the children of God."

What immediately follows is a demonstration that, at that time, Mr. Whitefield was no enemy to Christian perfection, and thought that some had actually attained it; or else nothing would have been more trifling than his concluding address to perfect Christians. Take his own words; and remember that when he preached them, by the ardour of his zeal, and the devotedness of his heart, he showed himself a young man in Christ, able to trample under foot the most alluring baits of the flesh and of the world.

"Fourthly and lastly," says he, "I address myself to those who have received the Holy Ghost in all its sancti-

fyng graces, and are almost ripe for glory. Hail, happy saints! for your heaven is begun upon earth. You have already received the first fruits of the Spirit, and are patiently waiting till that blessed change come, when your harvest shall be complete. I see and admire you, though, alas! at so great a distance from you.* Your life, I know, is hid with Christ in God. You have comforts, you have meat to eat, which a sinful, carnal," &c., "world knows nothing of; Christ's yoke is now become easy to you, and his burden light; you have passed through the pangs of the new birth, and now rejoice that Christ Jesus is formed in your hearts. You know what it is to dwell in Christ, and Christ in you. Like Jacob's ladder, although your bodies are on earth, yet your souls and hearts are in heaven; and by your faith and constant recollection, like the blessed angels, you do always behold the face of your Father which is in heaven. I need not then exhort you to press forward," &c. "Rather I will exhort you in patience to possess your souls yet a little while, and Jesus Christ will deliver you from the burden of the flesh, and an abundant entrance shall be administered unto you into the eternal joy," &c., "of his heavenly kingdom." I have met with few descriptions of the perfect Christian that please me better: I make but one objection to it. Mr. Whitefield thought, that the believers who, "by constant recollection, like the blessed angels, always behold the face of their Father," are so advanced in grace, that they "need not be exhorted to press forward." This is carrying the doctrine of perfection higher than Mr. Wesley ever did. For my part, were I to preach

* At that time Mr. Whitefield was in orders, and had "received the Spirit of adoption." As a proof of it, I appeal, 1. To the account of his conversion at Oxford before he was ordained; and, 2. To these, his own words, "I can say, to the honour of rich, free, distinguishing grace, that I 'received the Spirit of adoption' before I had conversed with one man, or read a single book, on the doctrine of free justification by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ;" that is, before he had had any opportunity of being drawn from the simplicity of the scripture gospel into the Calvinian refinements. See his Works, vol. iv., page 45. Now, those Christians who leave babes and young men in Christ "at so great a distance from them," are the very persons whom we call "fathers in Christ," or "perfect Christians."

to a congregation of such "happy saints," I would not scruple taking this text, "So run that ye may" eternally "obtain;" nor would I forget to set before them the example of the perfect apostle, who said, "This one thing I do, leaving the things that are behind, and reaching forth," &c., "I press towards the mark," &c. Had I been in Mr. Whitefield's case, I own, I would either have refused to join the imperfectionists, or I would have recanted my Address to perfect Christians.

So strong is the scriptural tide in favour of our doctrine, that it sometimes carries away the Rev. Mr. Romaine himself. Nor can I confirm the wavering reader in his belief of the possibility of obtaining the glorious liberty which we contend for, better than by transcribing a fine exhortation of that great minister to what we call "Christian perfection," and what he calls "the walk of faith:"—

"The new covenant runs thus: 'I will put, says God, my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,' &c. The Lord here engages to take away the stony heart, and to give an heart of flesh, upon which he will write the ten commandments," &c. "The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the selfish, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous. When the Holy Spirit teaches brotherly love, he overcomes all opposition to it," &c., "he writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, 'on which hang all the law and the prophets.' 'The love of God,' says the apostle to the Romans, 'is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost;' and to the Thessalonians, 'Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.' Thus he engages the soul to the holy law, and inclines the inner man to love obedience. It ceases to be a yoke and a burden. How easy is it to do what one loves! If you dearly love any person, what a pleasure is it to serve him! What will not love put you upon doing or suffering, to oblige him? Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleasantness. The soul will run; yea, inspired by love, it will mount up with wings as eagles, in the way of

God's commandments. Happy are the people that are in such a case." Now such a case is what we call "the state of Christian perfection," to the obtaining of which, Mr. Romaine excites his own soul by the following excellent exhortation :—

"This is the very tenor of the covenant of grace, which the almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil," (if we mix faith with the promises, as Mr. Romaine himself will soon intimate,) "and he cannot fail in his office. It is his crown and glory to make good his covenant engagements. O trust him then, and put honour upon his faithfulness." (That is, if I mistake not, make good your own covenant-engagements.) "He has promised to guide thee with his counsel, and to strengthen thee with his might, &c. What is within thee, or without thee, to oppose thy walking in love with him, he will incline thee to resist, and he will enable thee to overcome. O what mayest thou not expect from such a divine friend, who is to abide with thee on purpose to keep thy heart right with God!" (Query, When the heart is kept full of indwelling sin, is it kept right with God?) "What cannot he do, what will he not do, for thee? Such as is the love of the Father and of the Son, such is the love of the Holy Ghost; the same free, perfect, everlasting love. Read his promises of it. Meditate on them. Pray to him for increasing faith to mix with them; that he" (not sin) "dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayest have fellowship there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through the Son's atonement, pray the Holy Spirit to subdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever grace is to be received out of the fulness of Jesus, in order to keep up and to promote that communion, entreat the Holy Spirit to give it thee with growing strength. But pray in faith, nothing wavering. So shall the love of God rule in thy heart. And then thou shalt be like the sun, when it goeth forth in its might, shining clearer and clearer to the perfect day. O may thy course be like his, as free, as regular, and as communicative of good! that thy daily petition may be answered, and that the

will of thy Father may be done on earth as it is in heaven." Walk of Faith, vol. i., page 227, &c.

I do not produce this excellent quotation to insinuate that the Rev. Mr. Romaine is a perfectionist ; but only to edify the reader, and to show that the good, mistaken men who are most prejudiced against our doctrine, see it sometimes so true and so excellent, that, forgetting their pleas for indwelling sin, they intimate that our "daily petition may be answered," and that "the will of our Father may be done on earth as it is in heaven,"—an expression this, which includes the height and depth of all Christian perfection.

SECTION X.

THE scripture declares that "we are built upon the foundation of the apostles ; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone : " and St. Paul being deservedly considered as the chief of the apostles, and, of consequence, as the chief stone of the foundation on which, next to the corner-stone, our holy religion is built, who can wonder at the pains which our opponents take to represent this important part of our foundation as "carnal," "wretched," and "sold under sin?" Does not every body see that such a foundation becomes the antinomian structure which is raised upon it? And is it not incumbent upon the opposers of antinomianism, to uncover that wretched foundation, by removing the heaps of dirt in which St. Paul's spirituality is daily buried ; and, by this means, to rescue the holy apostle, whom our adversaries endeavour to sell under sin as a carnal wretch? This rescue has been attempted in the four last sections. If I have succeeded in this charitable attempt, I may proceed to vindicate the holiness of St. John, who is the last apostle that Mr. Hill calls to the help of indwelling sin, Christian imperfection, and a death-purgatory.

Before I show how the loving apostle is pressed into a service which is so contrary to his experience, and to his

doctrine of perfect love, I shall make a preliminary remark. To take a scripture out of the context, and to make it speak a language contrary to the obvious design of the sacred writer, is the way of butchering the body of scriptural divinity. This conduct injures truth as much as the Galatians would have injured themselves if they had literally pulled their eyes out, and given them to St. Paul. An edifying passage thus displaced may become as loathsome to a moral mind, as a good eye, torn out of its bleeding orb in a good face, is odious to a tender heart.

Among the passages which have been thus treated, none has suffered more violence than this: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John i. 8. "That is enough for me," says an hasty imperfectionist: "St. John clearly pleads for the indwelling of sin in us during the term of life; and he is so set against those who profess deliverance from sin, and Christian perfection, in this life, that he does not scruple to represent them as liars and self-deceivers!"

Our opponents suppose that this argument is unanswerable; but to convince them that they are mistaken we need only prove that the sense which they so confidently give to the words of St. John is contrary, 1. To his design; 2. To the context; and, 3. To the pure and strict doctrine which he enforces in the rest of the epistle.

I. With respect to St. John's design, it evidently was to confirm believers who were in danger of being deceived by antinomian and antichristian seducers. When he wrote this epistle the church began to be corrupted by men who, under pretence of knowing the mysteries of the gospel better than the apostles, imposed upon the simple Jewish fables, heathenish dreams, or vain philosophic speculations; insinuating that their doctrinal peculiarities were the very marrow of the gospel. Many such arose at the time of the reformation, who introduced stoical dreams into protestantism, and whom bishop Latimer, and others, steadily opposed under the name of "gospellers."

The doctrines of all these gossellers centred in making Christ, indirectly at least, the minister of sin ; and in representing the preachers of practical, self-denying Christianity, as persons unacquainted with Christian liberty. It does not, indeed, appear that the “gnostics,” or “knowing ones,”—for so the ancient gossellers were called,—carried matters so far as openly to say, that believers might be God’s dear children in the very commission of adultery and murder, or while they worshipped Milcom and Ashtaroth ; but it is certain that they could already reconcile the verbal denial of Christ, fornication, and idolatrous feasting, with true faith ; directly or indirectly “teaching and seducing” Christ’s “servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.” Rev. ii. 20. At these antinomians, St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude levelled their epistles. St. Paul strongly cautioned Timothy, Titus, and the Ephesians against them. See Eph. iv. 14 ; v. 6. And St. John wrote his first epistle to warn the believers who had not yet been seduced into their error ;—a dreadful, though pleasing, error this, which, by degrees, led some to deny Christ’s law, and then his very name : hence the triumph of the spirit of antichrist. Now, as these men insinuated that believers could be righteous without doing righteousness ; and as they supposed that Christ’s righteousness, or our own knowledge and faith, would supply the want of internal sanctification and external obedience ; St. John maintains, against them, the necessity of that practical godliness which consists in not committing sin, in not transgressing the law, in keeping the commandments, and in walking as Christ walked ; nay, he asserts that Christ’s blood, through the faith which is our victory, purifies “from all sin, and cleanses from all unrighteousness.” To make him, therefore, plead for the necessary continuance of indwelling sin, or heart-unrighteousness, till we go into a death-purgatory, is evidently to make him defeat his own design.

II. To be more convinced of it, we need only read the controverted text in connexion with the context ; illustrating both by some notes in parentheses. St. John opens his commission thus : “This is the message which we

have received of him," (Christ,) "and declare unto you, that God is light," (bright, transcendent purity,) "and in him is no darkness" (no impurity) "at all. If we" (believers) "say that we have fellowship with him," (that we are united to him by an actually living faith,) "and walk in darkness," (in impurity or sin,) "we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light," (if we live up to our Christian light, and do righteousness,) "we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John i. 5—7. For, "let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he" (Christ) "is righteous: and in him is no sin." 1 John iii. 7, 5. So far we see no plea either for sin, or for the Calvinian purgatory.

Should Mr. Hill reply, that, "when St. John says, 'The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' the loving apostle means all but indwelling sin; because this is a sin from which death alone can cleanse us;" we demand a proof, and, in the mean time, we answer, that St. John, in the above-quoted passages, says, that "he who doeth righteousness," in the full sense of the word, "is righteous as" Christ "is righteous;" observing, that "in him" (Christ) "is no sin." So certain, then, as there is no indwelling sin in Christ, there is no indwelling sin in a believer who "doeth righteousness," in the full sense of the word; for he is "made perfect in love," and is cleansed from all sin. Nor was St. John himself ashamed to profess this glorious liberty; for he said, "Our love is made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he" (Christ) "is" perfect in love, and, of consequence, without sin, "so are we in this world." 1 John iv. 17. And the whole context shows that the beloved apostle spake these great words of a likeness to Christ with respect to the perfect love which fulfils the law, abolishes tormenting fear, and enables the believer to stand with "boldness in the day of judgment," as being forgiven, "and conformed to the image of God's Son."

If Mr. Hill urges, that "the blood of Christ, powerfully applied by the Spirit, cleanses us, indeed, from the guilt,

but not from the filthiness, of sin ; blood having a reference to justification and pardon, but not to sanctification and holiness ;” we reply, that this argument is not only contrary to the preceding answer, but to the text, the context, and other plain scriptures. 1. To the text, where our being cleansed from all sin is evidently suspended on our humble and faithful walk : “ If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, the blood of Christ cleanses us,” &c. Now, every novice in gospel grace knows that true protestants do not suspend a sinner’s justification on his walking “ in the light, as ” God “ is in the light.” 2. It is contrary to the context ; for in the next verse but one, where St. John evidently distinguishes forgiveness and holiness, he peculiarly applies the word “ cleansing ” to the latter of these blessings : “ He is faithful to forgive us our sins,” by taking away our guilt, “ and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” by taking away all the filth of indwelling sin. And, 3. It is contrary to other places of scripture, where Christ’s blood is represented as having a reference to purification, as well as to forgiveness. God himself says, “ Wash ye ; make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well.” The washing and cleansing here spoken of have undoubtedly a reference to the removal of the filth, as well as of the guilt, of sin. Accordingly we read, that all those who “ stand before the throne have ” both “ washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; ” that is, they are justified by, and sanctified with, his blood. Hence our church prays, “ that we may so eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed ” (that is, made clean, also) “ through his most precious blood.” To rob Christ’s blood of its sanctifying power, and to confine its efficacy to the atonement, is therefore an antinomian mistake, by which our opponents greatly injure the Saviour, whom they pretend to exalt.

Should Mr. Hill assert, that when St. John says, “ If we walk in the light,” &c., “ the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin,” the loving apostle’s meaning is not, that

the blood of Christ radically cleanses us, but only, that it begins and carries on a cleansing from all sin, which cleansing will be completed in a death-purgatory; we answer: 1. This assertion leaves Mr. Hill's doctrine open to all the above-mentioned difficulties. 2. It overthrows the doctrine of the protestants, who have always maintained, that nothing is absolutely necessary to eternal salvation, and, of consequence, to our perfect cleansing, but an obedient, steadfast faith, apprehending the full virtue of Christ's purifying blood, according to Acts xv. 9, "God, giving them the Holy Ghost, put no difference between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith," not by death. 3. It is contrary to matter of fact; Enoch and Elijah having been translated to heaven, and therefore having been perfectly purified, even in body, without going into the Calvinian purgatory. But, 4. What displeases us most in the evasive argument which I answer is, that it pours the greatest contempt on Christ's blood, and puts the greatest cheat on weak believers, who sincerely want to be now made perfect in love, that they may now worthily magnify God's holy name.

An illustration will prove it. I suppose that Christ is now in England, doing as many wonderful cures as he formerly did in Judea. My benevolent opponent runs to the Salop infirmary, and tells all the patients there, that the great Physician, the Son of God, has once more visited the earth; that he again heals all manner of sickness and diseases among the people, and cleanses from the most inveterate leprosy by a touch or a word. All the patients believe Mr. Hill: some hop to this wonderful Saviour, and others are carried to his footstool. They touch and retouch him; he strokes them round again and again; but not one of them is cured. The wounds of some are indeed skinned over for a time; but it soon appears, that they still fester at the bottom, and that a painful core remains unextracted in every sore. The poor creatures complain to Mr. Hill: "Did you not, sir, assure us, upon your honour, as a Christian gentleman, that Christ heals all manner of diseases, and cleanses from all kinds of leprosies?" "True," says Mr. Hill; "but you

must know, that these words do not mean, that he radically cures any disease, or cleanses from any leprosy; they only signify, that he begins to cure every disease, and continues to cleanse from all leprosies. But, notwithstanding all his cures begun and continued, nobody is cured before death. So, my friends, you must bear your festering sores as well as you can, till death comes radically to cleanse and cure you from them all." Instead of crying, "Sweet grace! rich grace!" and of clapping Mr. Hill for his evangelical message, the disappointed patients desire him to take them back to the infirmary, saying, "We have there a chance for a cure before death; but your great Physician pronounces us incurable, unless death comes to the help of his art; and we think that any surgeon could do as much, if he did not do more." See section xii., argument 20.

If Mr. Hill says, that I "beat the air," and that "the text which" he quotes in his Creed for Perfectionists, "to show that it is impossible to be cleansed from all sin before death, is not 1 John i. 7, but the next verse;" I reply, that if St. John asserts, in verse 7, that Christ's blood, powerfully applied by the Spirit of faith, cleanseth us from all sin, that inspired writer cannot be so exceedingly inconsistent as to contradict himself in the very next verse.

Should the reader ask, "What then can be St. John's meaning in that verse where he declares, that 'if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?'" How can these words possibly agree with the doctrine of a perfect cleansing from all sin?" we answer, that, St. John, having given his first stroke to the antinomian believers of his day, strikes by the bye a blow at pharisaic professors. There were, in St. John's time, as there are in our own, numbers of men who had never been properly convinced of sin, and who boasted, as Paul once did, that, "touching the righteousness of the law, they were blameless:" they served God, they did their duty, they gave alms, they never did any body any harm; they thanked God, that they were not as other men, but especially, that they were not like those mourners in Sion, who were, no doubt, very wicked,

since they made so much ado about God's mercy, and a powerful application of the Redeemer's all-cleansing blood. How proper, then, was it for St. John to inform his readers, that these whole-hearted Christians, these perfect pharisees, were no better than liars and self-deceivers; and that true Christian righteousness is always attended by a genuine conviction of our native depravity, and by an humble acknowledgment of our actual transgressions!

This being premised, it appears, that the text so dear to, and so mistaken by, our opponents has this fair, scriptural meaning: "If we" (followers of him who came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance") "say we have no sin," (no native depravity from our first parents, and no actual sin, at least, no such sin as deserves God's wrath, fancying we need not secure a particular application of Christ's atoning and purifying blood,) "we deceive ourselves, and the truth" of repentance and faith "is not in us."

That these words are levelled at the monstrous error of self-conceited and self-perfected pharisees, and not at "the glorious liberty of the children of God," appears to us indubitable from the following reasons:—1. The immediately preceding verse strongly asserts this liberty. 2. The verse immediately following secures it also, and cuts down the doctrine of our opponents; the apostle's meaning being evidently this: Though I write to you, that if we say, We are originally free from sin, and never did any harm, "we deceive ourselves;" yet, mistake me not, I do not mean that we need continue under the guilt, or in the moral infection, of any sin, original or actual; for if we penitently and believingly confess both, "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," whether it be native or self-contracted, internal or external. Therefore, if we have attained the glorious liberty of God's children, we need not, through voluntary humility, say, that we do nothing but sin. It will be sufficient, when we are "cleansed from all unrighteousness," still to be deeply humbled for our present infirmities, and for our past sins, confessing both with godly sorrow and filial shame. For if we

should say, We have not sinned, (Note: St. John does not write, If we should say, We do not sin,) "we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us;" common sense dictating, that if "we have not sinned," we speak an untruth, when we profess that Christ has forgiven our sins. This appears to us the true meaning of 1 John i. 8, when it is fairly considered in the light of the context.

III. We humbly hope, that Mr. Hill himself will be of our sentiment if he compares the verse in debate with the pure and strict doctrine which St. John enforces throughout this epistle. In the second chapter he says, "We know that we know him, if we keep his commandments," &c. "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. He that abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked," &c. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light," where the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, "and there is none occasion of stumbling in him."

The same doctrine runs also through the next chapter: "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he" (Christ) "is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law," &c.: "and ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins;" that is, to destroy them root and branch; "and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth does not" properly see him, neither "know him." He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he" (Christ) "is righteous. He that committeth sin," (that is, as appears by the context, "he that transgresseth the law,") "is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God," (whosoever is made partaker of God's holiness according to the perfection of the Christian dispensation,) "doth not commit sin;" (that is, does not transgress the law;) "for his seed" (the ingrafted word, made quick and powerful by the indwelling Spirit) "remaineth in him, and" (morally speaking) "he cannot sin, because he is" thus "born of God." For "if ye

know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him," and that he that doeth not righteousness, he "that committeth sin," or transgresseth the law, "is" so far "of the devil; for the devil" transgresseth the law, that is, "sinneth from the beginning." "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.* Whosoever doeth not righteousness," that is, whosoever sinneth, taking the word in its evangelical meaning, "is not of God." 1 John iii. 3—11; ii. 29.

If Mr. Hill cries out, "Shocking! Who are those men that do not sin?" I reply, All those whom St. John speaks of a few verses below: "Beloved, if our heart condemn us," (and it will condemn us if we sin, but God much more, for) "God is greater than our heart," &c. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have confidence towards God," &c., "because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." 1 John iii. 20, &c. Now, we apprehend, all the sophistry in the world will never prove that, evangelically speaking, "keeping God's commandments" and "doing what pleases him" is sinning: therefore, when St. John professed to "keep God's commandments," and "to do what is pleasing in his sight," he professed what our opponents call "sinless perfection," and what we call "Christian perfection."

Mr. Hill is so very unhappy in his choice of St. John to close the number of his apostolic witnesses for Christian imperfection, that, were it not for a few clauses of his first epistle, the anti-solifidian severity of that apostle might drive all imperfect Christians to despair. And what is most remarkable, those few encouraging clauses are all conditional: "If any man sin;" (for there is no necessity that he should;) or rather, according to the most literal sense of the word *αμαρτη*, which, being in the aorist, has generally the force of a past tense, "If any

* This doctrine of St. John is perfectly agreeable to that of our Lord, who said, that Judas had a devil, because he gave place to the love of money; and who called Peter himself "Satan," when he "savoured the things of men" in opposition to "the things of God."

man have sinned ;” “ If he have not sinned unto death ;” “ If we confess our sins ;” “ If that which ye have heard shall remain in you ;” “ If we walk in the light ;”—then do we evangelically enjoy the benefit of our Advocate’s intercession. Add to this, that the first of those clauses is prefaced by these words : “ My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not ;” and all together are guarded by these dreadful declarations : “ He that says, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.” “ If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” “ If any man say, I love God, and loveth not his brother,” (Note : he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law,) “ he is a liar.” “ There is a sin unto death ; I do not say that he shall pray for it. Let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous.” “ He that committeth sin” (or transgresseth the law) “ is of the devil.” To represent St. John, therefore, as an enemy to the doctrine of Christian perfection, does not appear to us less absurd than to represent Satan as a friend to complete holiness.

SECTION XI.

If Mr. Hill had quoted Solomon instead of St. John, and Jewish instead of Christian saints, he might have attacked the glorious Christian liberty of God’s children with more success ; for “ the heir, as long as he is a child,” in Jewish nonage, “ differeth nothing from a servant ; but is under tutors” and schoolmasters “ until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,” “ and stand in the” peculiar “ liberty, wherewith Christ has made us” (Christians) “ free.” Gal. iv. 1—5 ; v. 1. But this very passage, which shows that Jews are, comparatively speaking, in bondage, shows also that the Christian dispensation, and its high privileges, cannot be

measured by the inferior privileges of the Jewish dispensation, under which Solomon lived. For "the law made nothing perfect" in the Christian sense of the word. And "what the law could not do, God sending his only son, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Christian believers) "who walk after the Spirit;" being endued with that large measure of it, which began to be poured out on believers in the day of pentecost; for that measure of the Spirit was not given before; "because Jesus was not yet glorified." John vii. 39. But after he had "ascended on high," and had "obtained the gift" of the "indwelling Comforter" for believers; they "received," says St. Peter, "the end of their faith," even "the" Christian "salvation of their souls;" a salvation this, which St. Paul justly calls "so great salvation," when he compares it with Jewish privileges. Heb. ii. 3. "Of which" Christian "salvation the" Jewish "prophets have inquired, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you" Christians; "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them," (according to their dispensation) "did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory" (the glorious dispensation) "that should follow" his return to heaven, and accompany the outpouring of his Spirit. "Unto whom" (the Jewish prophets) "it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us" (Christians) "they did minister the things which are now preached unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." 1 Pet. i. 9, &c. And, among those "things," the scriptures reckon the "coming" of "the" spiritual "kingdom" of Christ "with power" into the heart of believers; and the baptism of fire, or the perfect love, which "burns up the chaff" of sin, "thoroughly purges God's floor," and makes the hearts of perfect believers "an habitation of God through the Spirit," and not a nest for "indwelling sin."

As this doctrine may appear new to Mr. Hill, I beg leave to confirm it by the testimony of two as eminent divines as England has lately produced. The one is Mr. Baxter, who, in his comment upon these words, "A testament is

of force after men are dead," &c., Heb. ix. 17, very justly observes, that "his" (Christ's) "covenant has the nature of a testament, which supposeth the death of the testator, and is not of efficacy till then, to give full right of what he bequeatheth. Note, that the eminent, evangelical kingdom of the Mediator, in its last, full edition, called 'the kingdom of Christ, and of heaven,' distinct from the obscure state of promise before Christ's incarnation, began at Christ's resurrection, ascension, and sending of the eminent gift of the Holy Ghost, and was but as an embryo before." My other witness is the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, who proposes and answers the following question:—"Why was not the Holy Ghost given till Jesus Christ was glorified? Because till then he was himself on the earth, and had not taken on him the kingly office, nor pleaded the merits of his death before his heavenly Father, by which he purchased that invaluable blessing for us." See his works, vol. iv., p. 362. Hence I conclude, that, as the full measure of the Spirit, which perfects Christian believers, was not given before our Lord's ascension, it is as absurd to judge of Christian perfection by the experiences of those who died before that remarkable event, as to measure the powers of a sucking child by those of an embryo.

This might suffice to unnerve all the arguments which our opponents produce from the old testament against Christian perfection. However, we are willing to consider a moment those passages by which they plead for the necessary indwelling of sin in all Christian believers, and defend the walls of the Jericho within, that accursed "city of refuge" for spiritual Canaanites and Diabolonians.

I. 1 Kings viii. 46, &c., Solomon prays and says, "If they" (the Jews) "sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth* not,) and thou be angry with them, and

* If Mr. Hill consults the original, he will find that the word translated "sinneth" is in the future tense, which is often used for an indefinite tense in the potential mood, because the Hebrews have no such mood or tense. Therefore our translators would only have done justice to the original, as well as to the context, if they had rendered the whole

deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive ; yet, if they bethink themselves, and repent, and make supplication unto thee, and return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul : then hear thou their prayer." No unprejudiced person, who, in reading this passage, takes the parenthesis ("for there is no man that sinneth not") in the connexion with the context, can, I think, help seeing that the Rev. Mr. Toplady, who, if I remember right, quotes this text against us, mistakes Solomon, as much as Mr. Hill does St. John. The meaning is evidently, that "there is no man who is not liable to sin;" and that a man actually sins, when he actually departs from God. Now peccability, or a liability to sin, is not indwelling sin ; for angels, Adam, and Eve, were all liable to sin in their sinless state. And, that there are some men who do not actually sin is indubitable:

1. From the hypothetical phrase in the context, "if they sin," which shows that their sinning is not unavoidable.
2. From God's anger against those that sin, which is immediately mentioned. Hence it appears, that so certain as God is not "angry with all" his people, some of them "do not sin" in the sense of the wise man. And,
3. From Solomon's intimating, that these very men who have sinned, or have actually departed from God, may "bethink themselves, repent, and return to God with all their heart, and with all their soul," that is, may attain the perfection of their dispensation ; the two poles not being more opposed to each other, than sinning is to repenting ; and departing from God, to returning to him with "all our heart and with all our soul." Take therefore the whole passage together, and you have a demonstration, that "where sin hath abounded," there "grace" may "much more abound." And what is this, but a demonstration that our doctrine is not chimerical ? For if Jews, Solomon himself being judge, instead of sinning and departing from God, can "repent, and return" to him "with all their hearts," how much more Christians, whose privileges are so much greater !

clause, "There is no man that might not sin," instead of, "There is no man that sinneth not."

II. "But Solomon says also, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.' Eccles. vii. 20."

1. We are not sure that Solomon says it; for he may introduce here the very same man who, four verses before, says, "Be not righteous overmuch," &c., and Mr. Toplady may mistake the interlocutor's meaning in one text, as Dr. Trapp has done in the other. But, 2. Supposing Solomon speaks, may not he in general assert what St. Paul does, Rom. iii. 23, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," the "just" not excepted? Is not this the very sense which Canne, Calvinist as he was, gives to the wise man's words, when he refers the reader to this assertion of the apostle? And did we ever speak against this true doctrine? 3. If you take the original word "to sin," in the lowest sense which it bears; if it means in Eccles. vii. 20, what it does in Judges xx. 16, namely, "to miss a mark," we shall not differ; for we maintain, that, according to the standard of paradisiacal perfection, "there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and misses not" the mark of that perfection; that is, that does not lessen the good he does, by some involuntary, and therefore, evangelically speaking, "sinless defect." 4. It is bold to pretend to overthrow the glorious liberty of God's children, which is asserted in a hundred plain passages of the new testament, by producing so vague a text as Eccles. vii. 20. And to measure the spiritual attainments of all believers, in all ages, by this obscure standard, appears to us as ridiculous as to affirm, that of a thousand believing men, nine hundred and ninety-nine are indubitably villains; and that of a thousand Christian women, there is not one but is a strumpet; because Solomon says, a few lines below, "One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." Eccles. vii. 28.

III. If it be objected, that "Solomon asks, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' Prov. xx. 9;" we answer:—

1. Does not Solomon's father ask, "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Does a question of that nature always

imply an absurdity, or an impossibility? Might not Solomon's query be evangelically answered thus?—"The man in whom thy father David's prayer is answered, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God;'—the man who has regarded St. James's direction to the primitive solifidians, 'Cleanse your hearts, ye double minded;'—the man who has obeyed God's awful command, 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from iniquity, that thou mayest be saved;'—or the man who is interested in the sixth beatitude, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;'—that man, I say, can testify to the honour of 'the blood which cleanseth from all sin,' that 'he has made his heart clean.'"

2. However, if Solomon, as it is most probable, reproves in this passage the conceit of a perfect, boasting pharisee, the answer is obvious: no man of that stamp can say with any truth, "I have made my heart clean;" for the law of faith excludes all proud boasting, and "if we say" with the temper of the pharisee, "that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" for we have pride, and pharisaic pride too, which, in the sight of God, is perhaps the greatest of all sins. If our opponents take the wise man's question in either of the preceding scriptural senses, they will find that it perfectly agrees with the doctrine of Jewish and Christian perfection.

IV Solomon's pretended testimony against Christian perfection is frequently backed by two of Isaiah's sayings considered out of the context; one of which respects the filthiness of our righteousness, and the other the uncleanness of our lips. I have already proved, Check iv., letter viii., that the righteousness which Isaiah compares to "filthy rags," and St. Paul to "dung," is only the anti-evangelical, pharisaic righteousness of unhumiliated professors; a righteousness this, which may be called the righteousness of impenitent pride, rather than the righteousness of humble faith: therefore the excellence of the righteousness of faith cannot, with any propriety, be struck at by that passage.

V "But Isaiah, undoubtedly speaking of himself, says, 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips.' Isaiah vi. 5."

True: but give yourself the trouble to read the two following verses, and you will hear him declare, that the power of God's Spirit, applying the blood of sprinkling, (which power was represented by "a live coal taken from off the altar,") "touched his lips," so that "his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged." This passage, therefore, when it is considered with the context, instead of disproving the doctrine of Christian perfection, strongly proves the doctrine of Jewish perfection.

If Isaiah is discharged from the service into which he is so unwarrantably pressed, from the land of Uz our opponents will bring Job, whom the Lord himself pronounces perfect according to his dispensation, notwithstanding the hard thoughts which his friends entertained of him.

VI. Perfect Job is absurdly set upon demolishing Christian perfection, because he says, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say," (in a pharisaic, self-justifying spirit,) "I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." Job ix. 20. But, 1. What does Job assert here, more than Solomon does in the words to which Canne on this text judiciously refers his readers, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips?" Though even this rule is not without exception: witness the circumstances which drove St. Paul to what he calls a "confidence of boasting." 2. That professing the perfection of our dispensation in a self-abasing and Christ-exalting spirit, is not a proof of perverseness, is evident from the profession which humble Paul made of his being one of the perfect Christians of his time, Phil. iii. 15; and from St. John's declaration, that his "love was made perfect," 1 John iv. 17. For when we have the "witnessing Spirit, whereby we know the things which are freely given to us of God," we may, nay, at proper times, we should, acknowledge his gifts to his glory, though not to our own. 3. If God himself had pronounced Job perfect according to his dispensation, Job's modest fear of pronouncing himself so, does not at all overthrow the divine testimony: such a timorousness only shows, that the more we are advanced

in grace, the more we are averse to whatever has the appearance of ostentation; and the more deeply we feel what Job felt when he said, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." Job xl. 4.

VII. "But Job himself, far from mentioning his perfection, says, 'Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' Job xlii. 5, 6." And does this disprove our doctrine? Do we not assert, that our perfection admits of a continual growth, and that perfect repentance and perfect humility are essential parts of it? These words of Job, therefore, far from overthrowing our doctrine, prove that the patient man's perfection grew; and that from the top of the perfection of gentilism he saw the day of Christian perfection, and had a taste of what Mr. Wesley prays for, when he sings,

"O let me gain perfection's height!" &c.

"Confound, o'erpower me with thy grace
I would be by myself abhorr'd;
All might, all majesty, all praise,
All glory be to Christ my Lord!"

VIII. With respect to these words, "The stars are not pure, the heavens are not clean in his sight; his angels he charged with folly," Job xxv. 5; xv. 15; iv. 18; we must consider them as a proof that absolute perfection belongs to God alone; a truth this, which we inculcate as well as our opponents. Besides, if such passages overthrew the doctrine of perfection, they would principally overthrow the doctrine of angelical perfection, which Mr. Hill holds as well as we. To conclude:—

IX. When Job asks, "What is man, that he should be clean?" "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" and when he answers, "Not one," he means "not one who falls short of infinite power." If he excluded "Emmanuel, God with us," I would directly point at Him who said, "I will, be thou clean;" and at the believers who declare, "We can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us," and, accordingly, "cleanse

themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, that they may be found of him without spot and blameless." Yea, I would point at the poor leper, who has faith enough to say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." They tell me that my leprosy must cleave to me till death batter down this tenement of clay; but faith speaks a different language: only say the word, "Be thou clean," and I shall be cleansed:—"Purge me with hyssop, sprinkle clean water upon me, and I shall be clean from all my filthiness."

If these remarks are just, does it not appear, that it is as absurd to stab Christian perfection through the sides of Job, Isaiah, and Solomon; as to set Peter, Paul, James, and John, upon "cutting it up root and branch?"

SECTION XII.

I HAVE hitherto stood chiefly upon the defensive, by showing that Mr. Hill has no ground to insinuate, that our church, and Peter, Paul, James, and John, are defenders of the twin-doctrines of Christian imperfection and a death-purgatory. I shall now attack these doctrines by a variety of arguments, which, I hope, will recommend themselves to the candid reader's conscience and reason.

If I wanted to encounter Mr. Hill with a broken reed, and not with the weapons of a protestant,—reason and scripture,—I would retort here the grand argument by which he attempts to cut down our doctrines of free agency and cordial obedience: "The generality of the carnal clergy are for you: therefore your doctrines are false." If this argument is good, is not that which follows better still?—"The generality of bad men is for your doctrine of Christian imperfection: therefore that doctrine is false; for if it were true, wicked people would not so readily embrace it." But, as I see no solidity in an argument by which I could disprove the very being of a God, (for the generality of wicked men believe there

is a Supreme Being,) I discard it, and begin with one which, I hope, is not unworthy of the reader's attention.

I. Does not St. Paul insinuate, that no soul goes to heaven without perfection, where he calls the blessed souls that wait for an happy resurrection, *πνευματα δικαιων τετελειωμενων*, "the spirits of just men made perfect," and not *τετελειωμενα πνευματα δικαιων*, "the perfected spirits of just men?" Heb. xii. 23. Does not this mode of expression denote a perfection which they attained while they were men, and before they commenced separate spirits, that is, before death? Can any one go to a holy and just God without being first made just and holy? Does not the apostle say, that "the unrighteous" (or unjust) "shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord?" Must not this holiness, of whatsoever degree it is, be free from every mixture of unrighteousness? If a man has at death the least degree of any unrighteous and defiling mixture in his soul, must he not go to some purgatory, or to hell? Can he go to heaven, if "nothing that defileth shall enter the new Jerusalem?" And if at death his righteous disposition is free from every unrighteous, immoral mixture, is he not a just man perfected on earth, according to the dispensation he is under?

II. If Christ takes away the outward pollution of believers while he absolutely leaves their hearts full of indwelling sin in this life, why did he find fault with the pharisees for cleansing the "outside of the cup and platter," whilst they left the "inside full of all corruption?" If God says, "My son, give me thy heart;" if he "requires truth in the inward parts," and complains, that the "Jews drew near to him with their lips," when their "hearts were far from him;" is it not strange, he should be willing that the heart of his most peculiar people, the heart of Christians, should necessarily remain unclean during the term of life? Besides, is there any other gospel way of fully cleansing the lips and hands, but by thoroughly cleansing the heart? And is not a cleansing so far pharisaical as it is heartless? Once more: if Christ has assured us, that "blessed are the

pure" in heart, and that "if the Son shall make us free, we shall be free indeed," does it not behove our opponents to prove, that a believer has a pure heart who is full of indwelling corruption; and that a man is free indeed, who is still "sold under" inbred "sin?"

III. When our Lord has bound the indwelling man of sin, "the strong man armed," can he not "cast him out?" When he "cast out devils and unclean spirits" with a word, did he call death to his assistance? Did he not radically perform the wonderful cure to show his readiness and ability radically to cure those whose hearts are possessed by indwelling iniquity, that cursed sin whose name is "legion?" When the legion of expelled fiends "entered into the swine," the poor brutes were delivered from their infernal guests by being "choked in the sea." Death, therefore, cured them, not Christ. And can we have no cure but that of the swine? no deliverance from indwelling sin but in the arms of death? If this is the case, go, drown your plaguing corruptions in the first pond you will meet with, ye poor mourners, who are more weary of your life, because of indwelling sin, than Rebecca was because of the daughters of Heth.

IV How does the notion of sin, necessarily dwelling in the heart of the most advanced Christians, agree with the full tenor of the new covenant, which runs thus?—"I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" shall "make" them "free from the law of sin and death." If the laws of perfect love to God and man are fully put into the heart of a believer, according to the full tenor of Christ's gospel, what room remains for the hellish statutes of Satan? Does not the Lord cleanse the believer's heart as he writes the law of love there? And when that law is wholly written by the Spirit, "the finger of God," which applies the all-cleansing blood, is not the heart wholly cleansed? When God completely gives the heart of flesh, does he not completely take away the heart of stone? Is not the heart of stone the very rock in which the serpent, indwelling sin, lurks?

And will God take away that cursed rock, and spare the venomous viper that breeds in its clefts ?

V. Cannot the little leaven of sincerity and truth leaven the whole heart ? But can this be done without purging out entirely “ the old leaven of malice and wickedness ? ” May not a father in Christ be as free from sin as one who is totally given up to a reprobate mind is free from righteousness ? Is not the glorious liberty of God’s children the very reverse of the total and constant slavery to sin in which the strongest sons of Belial live and die ? If a full admittance of Satan’s temptation could radically destroy original righteousness in the hearts of our first parents ; why cannot a full admittance of Christ’s gospel radically destroy original unrighteousness in the hearts of believers ? Does not the gospel promise us, that “ where sin has abounded, grace ” shall “ much more abound ? ” And did not sin so abound once as entirely to sweep away inward holiness before death ? But how does grace abound much more than sin, if it never can entirely sweep away inward sin without the help of death ?

VI. Is there not a present, cleansing power, as well as a present, atoning efficacy, in the Redeemer’s blood ? Have we not already taken notice that the same scripture which informs us, that “ if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” declares also that, upon the same gracious terms, “ he is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ? ” Now, if the faithful and just God is ready to forgive to-day a poor mourner, who sincerely confesses his guilt,—and if it would be doing divine faithfulness and justice great dishonour to say, that God will not forgive a weeping penitent before the article of death,—is it doing those divine perfections honour to assert that God will not cleanse, before death, a believer, who humbly confesses and deeply laments the remains of sin ? Why should not God display his faithfulness and justice in cleansing us now from inbred sin, as well as in forgiving us now our actual iniquities, if we now comply with the gracious terms, to the performance of which this double blessing is annexed in the gospel charter ?

VII. If our opponents allow that faith and love may be made perfect two or three minutes before death, they give up the point. Death is no longer absolutely necessary to the destruction of unbelief and sin; for if the "evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God," may be taken away, and the completely "honest and good heart" given, two or three minutes before death, we desire to know why this change might not take place two or three hours, two or three weeks, two or three years, before that awful moment.

VIII. It is, I think, allowed on all sides that "we are saved," that is, sanctified, as well as justified, "by faith." Now, that particular height of sanctification, that full "circumcision of the heart," which centrally purifies the soul, springs from a peculiar degree of saving faith, and from a particular operation of the "Spirit of burning;"—a quick operation this, which is compared to a "baptism of fire," and proves sometimes so sharp and searching that it is as much as a healthy, strong man can do to bear up under it. It seems, therefore, absurd to suppose that God's infinite wisdom has tied this powerful operation to the article of death, that is, to a time when people, through delirium or excessive weakness, are frequently unable to think, or to bear the feeble operation of a little wine and water.

IX. When our Lord says, "Make the tree good, and its fruit good. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things;" does he suppose that the heart of his faithful people must always remain fraught with indwelling sin? Is indwelling sin a good treasure? or does Christ any where plead for the necessary indwelling of a bad treasure in a good man? When "the spouse is all glorious within; when her "eye is single," and her "whole body full of light;" how can she be still full of darkness and inbred iniquity? And when St. Paul observes, that established Christians are "full of goodness," (Rom. xv. 14,) who can think he means, that they are "full of heart-corruption?" and, what is worse still, that they must continue so to their dying day?

X. If Christian perfection is nothing but the depth of

evangelical repentance, the full assurance of faith, and the pure love of God and man shed abroad in a faithful believer's heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, to cleanse him, and to keep him clean "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit;" and to enable him to "fulfil the law of Christ," according to the talents he is entrusted with, and the circumstances in which he is placed in this world;—if this, I say, is Christian perfection, nothing can be more absurd than to put off the attaining of it till we die and go to heaven. This is evident from the descriptions of Christian perfection which we find in the new testament. The first is our Lord's account in the beatitudes. For how can holy mourning be perfected in heaven, where there will be nothing but perfect joy? Will not the loving disposition of peacemakers ripen too late for the church, if it ripens only in heaven, where there will be no peace-breakers? or in the article of death, when people lose their senses, and are utterly disabled from acting a reconciler's part? Ye that are "persecuted for righteousness' sake," will ye stay till you are among the blessed to "rejoice in tribulation?" Will the blessed "revile you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely," to give you an opportunity of being "exceeding glad" when you are "counted worthy to suffer for Christ's name?" And, ye double-minded Christians, will ye tarry for the blessedness of the "pure in heart" till ye come to heaven? Have ye forgot that heaven is no purgatory, but a glorious reward for those who are "pure in heart;"—for those who have "purified themselves, even as God is pure?"

XI. From the beatitudes, our Lord passes to precepts descriptive of Christian perfection reduced to practice: "If thy brother hath aught against thee, go thy way, and be reconciled to him." "Agree quickly with thine adversary." "Resist not evil." "Turn the left cheek to him that smites thee on the right." "Give alms" so as "not to let thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." "Fast" evangelically. "Lay not up treasures upon earth." "Take no" anxious "thought what you shall eat." "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in

heaven : for he maketh his sun to shine on the just and on the unjust." "Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." What attentive reader does not see that none of these branches of a Christian's practical perfection can grow in the article of death? and that to suppose they can flourish in heaven is to suppose that Christ says, "Be thus and thus perfect, when it will be absolutely impossible for you to be thus and thus perfect : love your enemies, when all will be your friends : do good to them that hate you, when all will flame with love towards you : turn your cheek to the smiters, when the cold hand of death will disable you from moving a finger ; or when God shall have fixed a great gulf between the smiters and you?"

XII. The same observation holds with respect to that important branch of Christian perfection which we call "perfect self-denial." "If thine eye offend thee," says our Lord, "pluck it out. If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off," &c. Now, can any thing be more absurd than to put off the perfect performance of these severe duties till we die, and totally lose our power over our eyes and hands? or, till we arrive at heaven, where nothing that offendeth can possibly be admitted?

XIII. St. Luke gives us, in the Acts, a sketch of the perfection of Christians living in community. "The multitude of them that believed," says he, "were of one heart and of one soul. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in prayers. They had all things common ; parting their possessions to all, as every man had need. Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." And "continuing daily in the temple," and "breaking bread from house to house, they ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." When I read this description of the practical perfection of a Christian church, I am tempted to smile at the mistake of our opponents, and to ask them if we can eat our meat with gladness in the article of death ; or sell our possessions for the relief of our brethren on earth, when we are gone to heaven.

XIV Consider we some of St. Paul's exhortations to

the display of the perfection which we contend for, and we shall see in a still stronger light the absurdity which I point out. He says to the Romans, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice; and be not conformed to this present world, that ye may prove what is that perfect will of God. Having different gifts," use them all for God: "exhorting with diligence, giving with simplicity, showing mercy with cheerfulness; not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality; weeping with them that weep, being of the same mind; condescending to men of low estate; providing things honest in the sight of all men; heaping coals of fire" (coals of burning love and melting kindness). "on the head of your enemy," by "giving him meat, if he is hungry, or drink, if he is thirsty; overcoming" thus "evil with good." Again: exhorting the Corinthians to Christian perfection, he says, "Brethren, the time is short. I would have you without carefulness. It remaineth that they who have wives be as if they had none; they that weep, as if they wept not; they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; they that buy, as if they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it," &c. Once more: stirring up the Philippians to the perfection of humble love, he writes, "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye think the same thing, have the same love; being of one soul, of one mind. Do nothing through vain glory, but in lowliness of mind esteem each the other better than themselves. Look not every one on his own things, but every one also on the things of others: let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who humbled himself and became obedient even unto death." Now, all these descriptions of the practical part of Christian perfection, in the very nature of things, cannot be confined to the article of death, much less to our arrival at heaven: for when we are dying, or dead, we cannot "present our bodies a living sacrifice;" we cannot "use this world as not abusing it;" nor can we "look at the things of others" as well as at our own.

XV The same thing may be said of St. Paul's fine description of Christian perfection, under the name of

“charity :” “Charity suffereth long ;” but at death all our sufferings are cut short. “Charity is not provoked ; it thinketh no evil ; it covereth all things ; it rejoiceth not in iniquity ; it hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things,” &c. The bare reading of this description shows that it does not respect the article of death, when we cease to “endure” any thing ; much less does it respect heaven, where we shall have absolutely nothing to endure.

XVI. If a perfect fulfilling of our relative duties is a most important part of Christian perfection, how ungenerous, how foolish is it to promise the simple, that they shall be perfect Christians at death, or in heaven ! Does not this assertion include all the following absurdities ?—Ye shall perfectly love your husbands and wives in the article of death, when you shall not be able to distinguish your husbands and wives from other men and women ; or in heaven, where ye “shall be like the angels of God,” and have neither husbands nor wives. Ye shall assist your parents and instruct your children with perfect tenderness, when ye shall be past assisting or instructing them at all ; when they shall be in heaven or in hell, past needing, or past admitting, your assistance and instructions. Ye shall inspect your servants with perfect love, or serve your masters with perfect faithfulness, when the relations of master and servant will exist no more. Ye shall perfectly bear with the infirmities of your weak brethren, when ye shall leave all your weak brethren behind, and go where all your brethren will be free from every degree of trying weakness. Ye shall entertain strangers, attend the sick, and visit the prisoners with perfect love, when ye shall give up the ghost, or when ye shall be in paradise, where these duties have no more place than lazaret-houses, sick beds, prisons, and gallows.

XVII. Death, far from introducing imperfect Christians into the state of Christian perfection, will take them out of the very possibility of their ever attaining it. This will appear indubitable, if we remember that Christian perfection consists in perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect hope, perfect love of an invisible God, perfect charity for visible enemies, perfect patience in pain, and perfect

resignation under losses ; in a constant bridling of our bodily appetites, in an assiduous keeping of our senses, in a cheerful taking up of our cross, in a resolute " following of Christ without the camp," and in a deliberate choice to " suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Now, so certain as there can be no perfect " repentance in the grave," no Christian faith where all is sight, no perfect hope where all is enjoyment ; no perfect love of an invisible God or of visible enemies, where God is visible and enemies are invisible ; no bearing pain with perfect patience, when pain is no more ; and no suffering affliction with the people of God, where no shadow of affliction lights upon the people of God, &c. : so certain, I say, as death incapacitates us for all these Christian duties, it incapacitates us also for every branch of Christian perfection. Mr. Hill might then as well persuade the simple, that they shall become perfect surgeons and perfect midwives, perfect masons and perfect gardeners, in the grave, or beyond it ; as to persuade them, that they shall become perfect penitents and perfect believers in the article of death, or in the new Jerusalem.

XVIII. From the preceding argument it follows, that the graces of repentance, faith, hope, and Christian charity, or love for an invisible God, for trying friends, and for visible enemies, must be perfected here or never. If Mr. Hill grants that these graces are, or may be, perfected here, he allows all that we contend for. And if he asserts, that they shall never be perfected, because there is " no perfection here," and because the perfection of repentance, &c., can have no more place in heaven than sinning and mourning ; I ask, what becomes then of the scriptures which Mr. Hill is so ready to produce when he defends Calvinian perseverance ? " As for God, his work is perfect." " Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you," who " have always obeyed," (Phil. i. 6,) " will perform," or $\epsilon\pi\iota\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\iota$, " will perfect it," if you continue to obey. " The Lord will perfect what concerneth me." " Praying exceedingly that we," as workers together with God, " might perfect that which is lacking in your

faith." "Looking unto Jesus, the author and" (τελειωτην) "the perfecter of our faith; for he is faithful that promised." How can the Lord be faithful, and yet never perfect the repentance and faith of his obedient people? Will he sow such a blessed seed as that of faith, hope, and love to our enemies, and never let a grain of it either miscarry, or bring forth fruit to perfection? Is not this a flat contradiction? How can a pregnant woman never miscarry, and yet never bring forth the fruit of her womb to any perfection? Such, however, is the inconsistency which Mr. Hill obtrudes upon us as gospel. If his doctrine of Calvinian perseverance is true, no believer can miscarry; no grain of true faith can fail of producing fruit to perfection. And if his doctrine of Christian imperfection is true, no believer can be perfect; no grain of faith, repentance, hope, and love for our husbands and wives, can possibly grow to perfection. How different is this doctrine from that of our Lord, who, in the parable of the sower, represents all those who do not "bear fruit unto perfection," as miscarrying professors!

XIX. If impatience was that bodily disorder which is commonly called the heartburn; if obstinacy was a crick in the neck; pride, an imposthume in the breast; raging anger, a fit of the toothache; vanity, the dropsy; disobedience, a bodily lameness; uncharitableness, the rheumatism; and despair, a broken bone; there would be some sense in the doctrine of Christian imperfection, and reason could subscribe to Mr. Hill's creed: for it is certain, that death effectually cures the heartburn, a crick in the neck, the toothache, &c. But what real affinity have moral disorders with bodily death? And why do our opponents think we maintain a "shocking" doctrine, when we assert, that death has no more power to cure our pride, than old age to remove our covetousness? Nay, do we not see that the most decrepit old age does not cure men even from the grossest lusts of the carnal mind? When old drunkards and fornicators are as unable to indulge their sensual appetites, as if they actually ranked among corpses, do they not betray the same inclinations which they showed when the strong tide of their youthful

blood joined with the rapid stream of their vicious habits? Is not this a demonstration, that no decay of the body, no, not that complete decay which we call death, has any necessary tendency to alter our moral habits? And do not the ancients set their seal to this observation? Does not Solomon say, that “in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be?” And has Mr. Hill forgotten those remarkable lines of Virgil?—

*Quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos?*

“Disembodied souls have, in the world of spirits, the very same dispositions and propensities which they had when they dwelt in the body.”

XX. If God had appointed death to make an end of heart pollution, and to be our complete saviour from sin, our opponents might screen their doctrine of a death-purgatory behind God's appointment; it being certain that God, who can command iron to swim, and fire to cool, could also command the filthy hands of death to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts. But we do not read in our bible either that God ever gave to indwelling sin a lease of any believer's heart for life, or that he ever appointed the king of terrors to deliver us from the deadly seeds of iniquity. And although the old testament contains an account of many carnal ordinances adapted to the carnal disposition of the Jews, we do not remember to have read there, Death “shall circumcise thy heart, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” Death “will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness” death “will cleanse you:” death “will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and” when you are dead, “ye shall keep my judgments and do them.” And if death was never so far honoured under the Mosaic dispensation, we ask, where he has been invested with higher privileges under the gospel of Christ. Is it where St. Paul says, that “Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?” It appears to us, that it is an high degree of rashness in the Calvinists, and in the

Romanists, to appoint the pangs of death, and the sorrows of hell, to do the most difficult, and of consequence the most glorious, work of Christ's Spirit, which is powerfully to "redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people," not full of all inbred unrighteousness, but "dead to sin, free from sin, pure in heart," and "zealous of good works." And we should think ourselves far more guilty of impertinence, if we nominated either death or hell to do the office of the final purifier of our hearts, than if we ordered a sexton to do the office of the prime minister, or an executioner to act as the king's physician. With respect to salvation from the root, as well as from the branches, of sin, we will therefore know nothing, as absolutely necessary, "but Jesus Christ, and him crucified," risen again, and ascended on high, that he might send the Holy Ghost to perfect us in love, through a "faith" that "purifies the heart," and through a "hope, which if any man hath, he will purify himself, even as God is pure."

XXI. To conclude: if Christian perfection implies the perfect use of "the whole armour of God," what can be more absurd than the thought, that we shall be made perfect Christians in heaven or at death? How will Mr. Hill prove that we shall perfectly use the helmet of hope, perfectly wield the shield of faith, and perfectly quench the fiery darts of the devil, in heaven, where faith, hope, and the devil's darts shall never enter? Or, how will he demonstrate, that a soldier shall perfectly go through his exercise in the article of death, that is, in the very moment he leaves the army, and for ever puts off the harness?

Mr. Baxter wrote in the last century a vindication of holiness, which he calls "A Saint or a Brute." The title is bold, but all that can be said to defend iniquity cannot make me think it too strong; so many are the arguments by which the scriptures recommend a holy life. And I own to thee, reader, that when I consider all that can be said in defence of Christian perfection, and all the absurdities which clog the doctrine of Christian imperfection, I am inclined to imitate Mr. Baxter's positiveness, and to

call this essay, "A perfect Christian in this world, or a perfect dupe in the next."

SECTION XIII.

THE arguments of the preceding section are produced to show the absurdity of Mr. Hill's doctrine of Christian imperfection; those which follow are intended to prove the mischievousness of that modish tenet.

I. It strikes at the doctrine of salvation by faith. "By grace are ye saved through faith," not only from the guilt and outward acts of sin, but also from its root and secret buds. "Not of works," * says the apostle, "lest any man should" pharisaically "boast:" and may we not add, Not of death, lest "he that had the power of death, that is, the devil, should" absurdly "boast?" Does not what strikes at the doctrine of faith, and abridges the salvation which we obtain by it, equally strike at Christ's power and glory? Is it not the business of faith to receive Christ's saving word, to apprehend the power of his sanctifying Spirit, and to inherit all the great promises by which "he saves his" penitent, believing "people from their sins?" Is it not evident, that, if no believers can be "saved from" indwelling "sin through faith," we must correct the apostle's doctrine, and say, "By grace ye are saved" from the remains of sin through death? And can unprejudiced protestants admit so Christ-debasing, so death-

* Here, and in some other places, St. Paul by "works" means only the deeds of a Christless, anti-mediatorial law, and the obedience paid to the Jewish covenant, which is frequently called "the law," in opposition to the Christian covenant, which is commonly called "the gospel," that is, the gospel of Christ, because Christ's gospel is the most excellent of all the gospel dispensations. The apostle, therefore, by the expression, "not of works," does by no means exclude from final salvation "the law of faith," and the works done in obedience to that law; for in the preceding verse he secures "the obedience of faith" when he says, "Ye are saved," that is, made partakers of the blessings of the Christian dispensation, "by grace through faith." Here, then, the word "by grace" secures the first gospel axiom, and the word "through faith" secures the second.

exalting a tenet without giving a dangerous blow to the genuine doctrines of the reformation ?

II. It dishonours Christ, as a Prophet ; for, as such, he came to teach us to be now “ meek and lowly in heart : ” but the imperfect gospel of the day teaches, that we must necessarily continue passionate and proud in heart till death ; for pride and immoderate anger are, I apprehend, two main branches of indwelling sin. Again : my motto demonstrates, that he publicly taught the multitudes the doctrine of perfection ; and Mr. Hill insinuates, that this doctrine is “ shocking, not to say blasphemous.”

III. It disgraces Christ, as the Captain of our salvation. For St. Paul says, that our Captain furnishes us with “ weapons mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan’s strong-holds,” and to the “ bringing of every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” But our opponents represent the devil’s strong-holds as absolutely impregnable. No “ weapons of our warfare ” can pull down Apollyon’s throne. Inbred sin shall maintain its place in man’s heart till death strike the victorious blow. Christ may, indeed, fight against the Jericho within, as “ Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon ; ” but then he must send for death, as Joab sent for David, saying, “ I have fought against Jericho, and have taken the city of waters : now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it ; lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.” 2 Sam. xii. 26—28.

IV It pours contempt upon him as the Surety of the new covenant, in which God has engaged himself to deliver obedient believers “ from their enemies, that they may serve him without ” tormenting “ fear all the days of their life ; ” for, how does he do his office in this respect, if he never sees that such believers be delivered from their most oppressive and inveterate enemy,—indwelling sin ? Or, if that deliverance takes place only at death, how can they, in consequence of their death-freedom, “ serve God without fear all the days of their life ? ”

V It affronts Christ, as a King, when it represents the believer’s heart, which is Christ’s spiritual throne, as

being necessarily full of indwelling sin,—a spiritual rebel, who, notwithstanding the joint efforts of Christ and the believer, maintains his ground against them both, during the term of life? Again: does not a good king deliver his loyal subjects from oppression, and avenge them of a tyrannical adversary, when they cry to him in their distress? But does our Lord show himself such a king, if he never avenges them, or turns the usurper, the murderer, sin, out of their breast? Once more: if our deliverance from sin depends upon the stroke of death, and not upon a stroke of Christ's grace, might we not call upon "the king of terrors," as well as upon "the King of saints," for deliverance from the remains of sin? But where is the difference between saying, "O death, help us," and crying, "O Baal, save us?"

VI. It injures Christ, as a restorer of pure spiritual worship in God's spiritual temple,—the heart of man; for it indirectly represents him as a pharisaic Saviour who made much ado about driving with a whip harmless sheep and oxen out of his Father's material temple, but gives full leave to satan, not only to bring sheep and doves into the believer's heart, but also to harbour and breed there. "during term of life," the swelling toad, pride, and the hissing viper, envy,—to say nothing of the greedy dog, avarice, and the filthy swine, impurity,—under pretence of "exercising the patience, and engaging the industry," of the worshippers, if we may believe the Calvin of the day. See argument 1, section xiv., against Christian perfection, at the end of this section.

VII. It insults Christ, as a Priest; for our Melchizedek shed his all-cleansing blood upon the cross, and now pours his all-availing prayer before the throne, asking that, upon evangelical terms, we may now be "cleansed from all unrighteousness," and "perfected in one." But if we assert, that believers, let them be ever so faithful, can never be thus cleansed, and perfected in one, till death come to the Saviour's assistance, do we not place our Lord's cleansing blood, and powerful intercession, and, of consequence, his priesthood, in an unscriptural and contemptible light?

Should Mr. Hill attempt to retort this argument by

saying, that "it is our doctrine, not his, which derogates from the honour of Christ's priesthood, because we should no longer need our High Priest's blood if we were cleansed from all sin;" I reply,

1. Perfect Christians need as much the virtue of Christ's blood, to prevent the guilt and pollution of sin from returning, as imperfect Christians want it to drive that guilt and pollution away. It is not enough that the blood of the true paschal Lamb has been sprinkled upon our souls to keep off the destroyer; it must still remain there to hinder his coming back "with seven other spirits more wicked than himself." 2. Mr. Hill is in the dark: he calls for a light; and when it is brought, he observes the darkness of his room is now totally removed. "Is it so, sir?" replies his footman; "then you need these wax-candles no more: if they have totally removed the darkness of your apartment, you have no more need of them." Mr. Hill smiles at the absurdity of his servant's argument; and yet it is well if he does not admire the wisdom of my opponent's objection. 3. The hearts of perfect Christians are cleansed and kept clean by faith; and Christian perfection includes the perfection of Christian faith, whose property it is to endear Christ and his blood more and more. Nothing, then, can be less reasonable than to say, that, upon our principles, perfect believers have done with the atoning blood. 4. Such believers continually "overcome the accuser of the brethren through the blood of the Lamb;" there is no moment, therefore, in which they can spare it: they are feeble believers who can yet dispense with its constant application; and hence it is that they continue feeble. None make so much use of Christ's blood as perfect Christians. Once it was only their medicine, which they took now and then, when a fit of fear, or a pang of guilt, obliged them to it. But now it is the divine preservative, which keeps off the infection of sin. Now it is the reviving cordial, which they take to prevent their growing weary or faint in their minds. Now it is their daily drink. Now it is what they sprinkle their every thought, word, and work with. In a word, it is that blood which

constantly speaks before God, and in their conscience, "better things than the blood of Abel," and actually procures for them all the blessings which they enjoy or expect. To say, therefore, that the doctrine of Christian perfection supersedes the need of Christ's blood, is not less absurd than to assert, that the perfection of navigation renders the great deep an useless reservoir of water. Lastly: are not the saints before the throne perfectly sinless? And who are more ready than they to extol the blood and sing the song of the Lamb?—"To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory," &c. If an angel preached to them the modern gospel, and desired them to plead for the remains of sin, lest they should lose their peculiar value for the atoning blood, would they not all suspect him to be an angel of darkness, transforming himself into an angel of light? And shall we be the dupes of the tempter, who deceives good men, that they may deceive us by a similar argument?

VIII. It discredits Christ, as the fulfiller of the Father's promise, and as the sender of the indwelling, abiding Comforter, that our joy may be full; for the Spirit never takes his constant abode, as a comforter, in a heart full of indwelling sin. If he visits a sinful heart with his consolations, it is only as "a guest that tarrieth but a day." When he enters a soul fraught with inbred corruption, he rather acts as a reprover, than as a comforter; throwing down the tables of the spiritual money-changers; hindering the vessels which are not "holiness unto the Lord" from being carried through God's spiritual temple; and expelling, according to the degree of our faith, whatsoever would make God's house "a den of thieves."

But instead of this, Mr. Hill's doctrine considers the heart of believers as a den of lions, and represents Christ's Spirit, not as the destroyer, but as the keeper, of the wild beasts and evil tempers which dwell in our breasts. This I conclude from these words of the Rev. Mr. Toplady: "They" (indwelling sin and unholy tempers) "do not quite expire, till the renewed soul is taken up from earth

to heaven. In the mean time, these hated remains of depravity will, too often, like prisoners in a dungeon, crawl towards the window, though in chains, and show themselves through the grate. Nay, I do not know whether the strivings of inherent corruption for mastery be not frequently more violent in a regenerate person, than even in one who is dead in trespasses ; as wild beasts are sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded." See Caveat against unsound Doctrines, page 54. When I read this gospel, I cannot but throw in a caveat against Mr. Toplady's caveat. For, if his is not "unsound," every body must allow it to be uncomfortable and unsafe. Who would not think it dreadfully dangerous to dwell with one wild beast that cannot be killed, unless we are first killed ourselves? But how much more dangerous is it to be condemned to dwell for life with a parcel of them, which are not only immortal, so long as we are alive, but "are sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded!" The saviour preached by Mr. Toplady only wounds the Egyptian dragon,—the inward Pharaoh, and makes him rage ; but our Jesus drowns him in the sea of his own blood, barely by stretching out the rod of his power, when we stretch out to him our arms of faith. Mr. Hill's redeemer only takes Agag prisoner, as double-minded Saul did ; but our Redeemer hews him in pieces, as upright Samuel. The christ of the Calvinists says, "Confine the enemy, though he may possibly be fiercer than before ;" but ours thrusts out the enemy before us, and says, "Destroy." Deut. xxxiii. 27. O ye preachers of finished salvation, we leave it to your candour to decide which of these doctrines brings most glory to the saving name of Jesus.

IX. The doctrine of our necessary continuance in indwelling sin to our last moments makes us naturally overlook or despise the "exceeding great and precious promises given unto us, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature," (that is, of God's perfect holiness,) "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter i. 4. And by that means it naturally defeats the full effect of evangelical truths and minis-

terial labours ;—an effect this, which is thus described by St. Paul : “ Teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,” that is, perfect according to the richest dispensation of divine grace, which is the “ gospel of Christ Jesus.” Col. i. 28. Again : “ The scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Now, we apprehend that the perfection which thoroughly furnishes believers unto all good works is a perfection productive of all the “ good works which are ” evangelically, as well as providentially, “ prepared that we should ” walk in them before death ; because, whatever Mr. Hill may insinuate to the contrary in England, and father Walsh at Paris, the scripture says, “ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work nor device ” in death, that is, “ in the grave, whither thou goest.” For as the tree falls, so it lies : if it fall full of rottenness, with a brood of vipers and a never-dying worm in its hollow centre, it will continue in that very condition ; and woe to the man who trusts that the pangs of death will kill the worm, or that a purgative fire will spare the rotten wood and consume the vipers !

X. It defeats, in part, the end of the gospel precepts, to the fulfilling of which gospel promises are but a means. “ All the law, the prophets,” and the apostolic writings, “ hang on these two commandments : Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself,” through penitential faith in the light of thy dispensation ; that is, in two words, Thou shalt be “ evangelically perfect.” Now, if we believe that it is absolutely impossible to be thus perfect by keeping these two blessed commandments in faith ; we cannot but believe, also, that God, who requires us to keep them, is defective in wisdom, equity, and goodness, by requiring us to do what is absolutely impossible : and we represent our church as a wicked stepmother which betrays all her children into the wanton commission of perjury, by requiring of every one of them, in the sacrament of baptism, a most solemn vow, by which they bind themselves, in the presence of God and of the congrega-

tion, that they will "keep God's holy will and commandments," that is, that they will keep God's evangelical law, "and walk in the same all the days of their life."

XI. It has a necessary tendency to unnerve our deepest prayers. How can we pray in faith, that God would help us to do his will "on earth as it is done in heaven?" or that he would "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts that we may perfectly love him and worthily magnify his holy name?"—how can we, I say, ask this in faith, if we disbelieve the very possibility of having these petitions answered? And what poor encouragement had Epaphras, upon the scheme which we oppose, "always to labour fervently for" the Colossians "in prayers, that they might stand perfect and complete in the will of God;" or St. Paul, to wish that "the very God of peace" would "sanctify" the Thessalonians "wholly," and that their "whole spirit, and soul, and body, might be preserved blameless;" if these requests could not be granted before death, and were unavoidably to be granted to them and to all believers in the article of death?

XII. It soothes lukewarm, unholy professors, and encourages them to sit quietly under the vine of Sodom, and under their own barren fig-tree; I mean, under the baneful influence of their unbelief and indwelling sin; nothing being more pleasing to the carnal mind than this syren song: "It is absolutely impossible that the thoughts of your hearts should be cleansed in this life. God himself does not expect that you should be purified from all iniquity on this side the grave. It is proper that sin should dwell in your heart by unbelief, to endear Christ to you, and so to 'work together for your good.'" The preachers of mere morality insinuate, that God does not forgive sins before death. This dangerous, uncomfortable doctrine damps the faith of penitents, who think it absurd to expect, before death, what they are taught they can only receive at death. And, as it is with the pardon of sins, so it is, also, with the cleansing from all unrighteousness. The preachers of Christian imperfection tell their hearers, that nobody can be cleansed from heart-sin before death. This new gospel makes them secretly trust in a death-purgatory, and

hinders them from pleading, in faith, the promise of full sanctification before death stares them in the face ; while others, like spared Agag, madly venture upon the spear of the king of terrors with their hearts full of indwelling sin. The dead tell no tales now ; but it will be well if, in the day of the resurrection, those who plead for the necessary indwelling of sin during the term of life do not meet in the great day with some deluded souls who will give them no thanks for betraying them to their last moments into the hands of indwelling sin, by insinuating that there can be no deliverance from our evil tempers before we are ready to exchange a death-bed for a coffin.

XIII. It greatly discourages willing Israelites, and weakens the hands of the faithful spies, who want to lead feeble believers on, and to take by force the kingdom which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; nothing being more proper to damp their ardour than such a speech as this : “ You may strive against your corruptions and evil tempers as long as you please ; but you shall never get rid of them. The Jericho within is impregnable : it is fenced up to heaven, and garrisoned by the tall, invincible, immortal sons of Anak. So strong are these adversaries, that the twelve apostles, with the help of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, could never turn one of them out of his post. Nay, they so buffeted and overpowered St. Paul, the most zealous of the apostles, that they fairly took him prisoner, sold him under sin, and made him groan to the last, ‘ O wretched, carnal man that I am, who shall deliver me from the law of my inbred corruptions, ‘ which bring me into captivity to the law of sin ? I thank God,’ through death. ‘ So then with the flesh’ you must, as well as St. Paul, ‘ serve the law of sin’ till you die. Nor need you fret at these tidings ; for they are the pure gospel of Christ, the genuine doctrines of free grace and Christian liberty. In Christ you are free, but in yourselves you must continue to serve the law of sin : and, indeed, why should you not do it ? since ‘ the sins of a Christian are for his good,’ and ‘ even the dung of a sheep of’ Christ is of some use ; nay,

of the most excellent use, if we believe Mr. Hill ; for the most grievous falls,—falls into repeated acts of adultery, and into deliberate murder, serve to make us know our place, to drive us nearer to Christ, and to make us sing louder the praises of restoring grace. Besides, that gentleman represents those who preach deliverance from indwelling sin before we go into a death-purgatory as men of a pharisaic cast ; blind men, who never saw their own hearts ; proud men, who oppose the righteousness of God ; vain men, who aspire at robbing Christ of the glory of being alone without sin ; in short, men who hold doctrines which are ‘shocking, not to say blasphemous.’”

How would this speech damp our desires after salvation from indwelling sin ; how would it make us hug the cursed chains of our inbred corruptions, if the cloven foot of the imperfect, unchaste Diana, which it holds out to public view without gospel sandals, was not sufficient to shock us back from this impure gospel to the pure gospel of Jesus Christ ! And yet, if I am not mistaken, this dangerous speech only unfolds the scope of Mr. Hill’s Creed for Perfectionists.

XIV To conclude : the modish doctrine of Christian imperfection and death-purgatory is so contrived that carnal men will always prefer the purgatory of the Calvinists to that of the papists ; for the papists prescribe, I know not how many cups of divine wrath and dire vengeance, which are to be drunk by the souls of the believers who die half-purged or three-parts cleansed. These half-damned, or a quarter-damned, creatures must go through a severe discipline, and fiery salivation, in the very suburbs of hell, before they can be perfectly purified. But our opponents have found out a way to deliver half-hearted believers out of all fear in this respect. Such believers need not utterly abolish the body of sin in this world. The inbred man of sin, not only may, but he shall, live as long as we do. You will possibly ask, “What is to become of this sinful guest ? Shall he take us to hell, or shall we take him to heaven ? If he cannot die in this world, will Christ destroy him in the next ?” No ; here

Christ is almost left out of the question by those who pretend to be determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. Our indwelling adversary is not destroyed by the brightness of the Redeemer's spiritual appearing, but by the gloom of the appearance of death. Thus they have found another Jesus, another saviour from sin. The king of terrors comes to the assistance of Jesus's sanctifying grace, and instantaneously delivers the carnal believer from indwelling pride, unbelief, covetousness, peevishness, uncharitableness, love of the world, and inordinate affection. Thus the clammy sweats brought on by the greedy monster kill, it seems, the tree of sin, of which the blood of Christ could only kill the buds. The dying sinner's breath does the capital work of the Spirit of holiness; and, by the most astonishing of all miracles, the faint, infectious, last gasp of a sinful believer blows away, in the twinkling of an eye, the great mountain of inward corruption, which all the means of grace, all the faith, prayers, and sacraments of twenty, perhaps of forty, years, with all the love in the heart of our Zerubbabel, all the blood in his veins, all the power in his hands, and all the faithfulness in his breast, were never able to remove. If this doctrine is true, how greatly was St. Paul mistaken when he said, "The sting of death is sin," &c. : "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Christ our Lord!" Should he not have said, "Death is the cure of sin," instead of saying, "Sin is the sting of death?" And should not his praises flow thus?—"Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through death," our great and only deliverer from our greatest and fiercest enemy, indwelling sin.

SECTION XIV

THE pleasing effect of the lights in a picture is considerably heightened by the bold opposition of strong shades. If the preceding arguments are the lights by which we hope agreeably to strike the mental eyes of the

reader who candidly considers the doctrine of Christian perfection ; it will not be improper to heighten those lights by the amazing contrast of the arguments which our opponents advance in defence of indwelling sin and Christian imperfection. These arguments appear to us, shades,—bold, logical shades : but the bolder they are, the more they will set off the lustre of the truth which we recommend ; for, if “all things work for good to them that love God,” why should not all the errors of others work for good to them that love the truth ? I am abundantly furnished with the erroneous shades I want by three of the most approved authors, who support the ark of the imperfect gospel, the Rev. Mr. Toplady, author of the *Historic Proof of Calvinism* ; the Rev. Mr. Martin, author of several tracts which are esteemed by the Calvinists ; and the Rev. Mr. Henry, famous for his voluminous exposition of the bible.

The first of these authors, in his *Caveat against unsound Doctrine*, intimates that there never were on earth but three persons possessed of the sinless perfection which we contend for,—Adam, Eve, and Jesus Christ : a bold intimation this, which, like the babel I attack, has its foundation in confusion ; in the confusion of three perfections which are entirely different,—the paradisiacal, sinless perfection of our first parents ; the mediatorial, sinless perfection of Jesus Christ ; and the Christian, evangelically-sinless perfection of St. John. This intimation is supported by some passages from Solomon, which have been already considered in section xi., and by the following argument :—

FIRST ARGUMENT.—“A person of the amplest fortune cannot help the harbouring of snakes, toads, &c., on his lands ; but they will breed, and nestle, and crawl about his estate, whether he will or no. All he can do is to pursue and kill them whenever they make their appearance ; yet let him be ever so vigilant and diligent, there will always be a succession of those creatures TO EXERCISE HIS PATIENCE, AND ENGAGE HIS INDUSTRY. So it is with the true believer in respect of indwelling sin.” *Caveat against unsound Doctrine*, page 54. To this we answer :—

1. From the clause which I produce in capitals in this

argument, one would think that patience and industry cannot be properly exercised without indwelling sin. If so, does it not follow, that our Lord's patience and industry always wanted proper exercise, because he was always perfectly free from indwelling sin? We are of a different sentiment with respect to our Lord's Christian virtues; and we apprehend, that the patience and industry of the most perfect believer will always, without the opposition of indwelling sin, find full exercise in doing and suffering the whole will of God; in keeping the body under, in striving against the sin of others, in testifying by word and deed that the works of the world are evil, in resisting the numberless temptations of him who "goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" and in preparing to conflict with the king of terrors.

2. Why could not assiduous vigilance clear an estate of snakes, as one of our kings cleared Great Britain of wolves? Did he not attempt and accomplish what appeared impossible to less resolute minds? Mr. Toplady is too well acquainted with the classics not to know what the heathens themselves have said of industry and love :—

*Omnia vincit amor.
Labor improbus omnia vincit.*

If "love and incessant labour overcome the greatest difficulties," what cannot a diligent believer do who is animated by the love of God, and feels that he "can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth him?"

3. But the capital flaw of Mr. Toplady's argument consists in so considering the weakness of free will, as entirely to leave God, and the sanctifying power of his Spirit, out of the question. That gentleman forgets, that "for this purpose the Son of God" (who is "Lord God omnipotent") "was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Nor does he consider, that a worm, assisted by omnipotence itself, is capable of the greatest achievements. Of this we have an illustrious instance in Moses, with respect to the removal of the lice, the frogs, and the locusts: "Moses entreated the Lord, and the Lord turned

a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea ; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt." Exodus x. 19. If Mr. Toplady had not forgot the mighty God with whom Moses and believers have to do, he would never have supposed, that the comparison holds good between Christ cleansing the thoughts and heart of a praying believer by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, and a man who can by no means destroy the snakes and toads that breed, nestle, and crawl about his estate.

4. The reverend author of the Caveat sinks, in this argument, even below the doctrine of heathen moralists. For, suppose the extirpation of a vicious habit were considered, would not an heathen be inexcusable if he overlooked the succour and inspiration of the Almighty ? And what shall we say of a gospel minister who, writing upon the destruction of sin, entirely overlooks what, at other times, he calls the "sovereign, matchless, all-conquering, irresistible" power of divine grace, which, if we believe him, is absolutely to do all in us and for us ? who insinuates, that the toad—pride, and the viper—envy, must continue to nestle and crawl in our breasts for want of ability to destroy them ; and who concludes, that the extirpation of sin is impossible because we cannot bring it about by our own strength ? Just as if the power of God, which helps our infirmities, did not deserve a thought ! Who does not see, that when a divine argues in this manner, he puts his bushel upon the light of Christ's victorious grace, hides this sin-killing and heart-cleansing light, and then absurdly concludes, that the darkness of sin must necessarily remain in all believers ? Thus, if I mistake not, it appears that Mr. Toplady's argument in favour of the death-purgatory is contrary to history, experience, and gentilism ; and how much more to Christianity, and to the honour of him who to the uttermost saves his believing people from their heart-toads and bosom-vipers, when they go to him for this great salvation !

The next author who shall furnish me with logical shades is the ingenious and rev. Mr. Martin, who has

just published a plea for the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers. He calls it, "The Christian's peculiar Conflict, an Essay on Galatians v. 17;" and from it I extract the arguments which follow:—

SECOND ARGUMENT.—"O, ye vain boasters of inherent perfection, say, where is the man among you to be found, who always doeth the things that he would? If there be one who has this pre-eminence above his brethren, why should his name be concealed? Is he a preacher? and dare he assert he has at all times that discovery of the truth to his own soul he could wish?" &c. "Is he a private Christian? and will he venture to declare, that in every character he sustains," &c., "he continually acts not only the conscientious part, but in every respect fulfils the desire of his mind? What! does he hesitate? Is he afraid to attest this in the presence of an heart-searching God? How deceitful then is his confidence!" &c. "Strange infatuation! if he cannot at all times do the things, the good things, that he would, can he suppose his best desires are more extensive than that law which is exceeding broad?" &c. "If he can be so vain as to suppose this, there is more hope of a fool than of him who is so wise in his own conceit. If he disowns the inference, and yet maintains his premises that he is perfect,—that is, he is without sin, he has ceased to commit iniquity,—what is the conclusion? I am obliged to conclude, that perfection and imperfection, things as contrary to each other as light and darkness, are, with such a deluded person, considered as one and the same thing." Page 15, &c.

This argument, stripped of its rhetorical ornaments, and put into a plain logical dress, runs thus:—

"When Christians do not do all the good things which they desire to do, they sin, or break God's law, which is purer and broader than their desires; but the best ministers, and the best private Christians, do not do all the good things which they desire to do; and therefore the best ministers and the best private Christians sin, and their sinless perfection is an empty boast." We may bring the argument into a still narrower compass, thus: "All short-comings are sinful, and therefore inconsistent

with every kind of perfection." Now, this proposition, which is the basis of the whole argument, has error for its foundation. Granting that short-comings are inconsistent with the absolute will of God, and with the perfection of his boundless power, I affirm four things, each of which, if I mistake not, overturns our objector's argument :—

1. The separate "spirits of just men made perfect" are perfectly sinless ; nevertheless, they "do not do" all "the things that they would," for they have not yet prevailed to get the blood of God's martyrs avenged ; a display of justice this which they ardently wish for ; and I prove it by these words of St. John : "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God : and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?" Rev. vi. 9, 10. Had they done what they wished,—that is, actually prevailed with God,—their prayer would have been immediately turned into praises, and persecutors would long ago have been rooted out from the earth.

2. For want of infinite wisdom, does not perfect love in finite creatures frequently desire to do more for its object than it can ? When Michael fought with the dragon, is it not highly probable that he lovingly desired to hinder his cruel adversary from doing any farther mischief ? But did not his performance fall short of his pious, resigned desire ? May not this be said also of the guardian care of the angels who minister to the heirs of salvation ? Do these loving spirits afford us all the help, or procure us all the bliss, which their tender compassion prompts them to wish us ? If not, is it not absurd to suppose, that, barely on this account, they are sinfully imperfect ? Nay, would it not be a high degree of rashness and injustice to insinuate, that they are transgressors of God's spiritual law ; and that his commandment, which is broader than their desires, is broken by their not doing us all the good which they desire to do us, and which they would actually do us, if a wise Providence had not set bounds to their commission ? Does not this unscrip-

tural, Calvinian legality put the stamp of sinfulness upon all angels and archangels, merely to keep in countenance the antinomian doctrine of the necessary sinfulness of all believers?

3. If we consider our Lord himself as a man, did he do all the good he would while he was upon earth? Did he preach as successfully as his perfect love made him desire to do? If he had all the success he desired in his ministry, why did he look round upon his hearers "with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts?" Why did he weep and complain, "How often would I have gathered you," &c., "and ye would not?" Were even his private instructions so much blessed to his own disciples as he could have wished? If they were, what meant these strange expostulations?—"How is it that ye have no faith?" "Faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?" "Hast thou been so long with me, Philip, and yet hast thou not known me?" "Will ye also go away?"

Nay, had not Christ his innocent infirmities too? Did he not shudder at the prospect of the cup of trembling? Needed he not the strengthening support of "an angel" in the garden of Gethsemane? Did he not "offer up prayers with strong cryings and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death?" Was he not "heard in that he feared?" Heb. v. 7. Did he not innocently cry out upon the cross, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" And does not the apostle observe, that "we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but" one who "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin?" Heb. iv. 15. When our opponents, therefore, confound sin with natural, innocent infirmities, or with our not doing all the good we would, do they not inadvertently fix a blot upon the immaculate character of Him who could say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

4. My pious opponent wishes, no doubt, to praise God as perfectly as an angel; whilst an angel probably desires to do it as completely as an archangel; but in the nature of things this cannot be. Thousands of God's moral

vessels, which are perfect in their place and degree, and as such adorn God's universal temple, fall short of each other's perfection, without being sinfully imperfect on that account. When deficiencies are natural, and not moral, if we call them "sin," in many cases we charge God with the creation of sin. Nor is it any more sin in a man, not to magnify God so vigorously as an angel, or in an angel not to serve his Creator so perfectly as an archangel, than it is a sin in a good soldier not to do the king such excellent service as an experienced captain, or a consummate general. In the moral world, as well as in the natural, "one star" may "differ from another star in glory," without the least disparagement to its peculiar perfection. The injudicious refinements of Calvinism make a confused jumble of God's works, as they do of God's truths, and of the various perfections which belong to the various classes of his children; but a wise dispenser of the word will do by those various truths and perfections as Joseph did by his brothers: "he placed them, the firstborn according to his birthright," or superiority, "and the youngest according to his youth," or inferiority.

5. We are not ashamed to assert, that perfection in one respect, and imperfection in another respect, may consistently meet in the same subject; or, that men and things may be perfect in one sense and imperfect in another. If our opponents ridicule us for it, we will present them with an ocular, and by no means "metaphysical," demonstration of their mistake. Two perfect grains, the one of barley, and the other of wheat, lie before us. I say, with the perfectionists, that "the grain of barley is perfect in its kind; but imperfect, or inferior in excellence, when it is compared to the grain of wheat." But Mr. Martin, at the head of the imperfectionists, thinks me deluded, and placing himself in his judgment-seat, gravely says, "I am obliged to conclude, that perfection and imperfection, things as contrary to each other as light and darkness, are with such a deluded person considered as one and the same." "Some are so unaccountably absurd and ridiculous." Reader, thou art judge and jury. Pronounce which of the two deserve best this imputation of "un-

accountable absurdity,"—the author of this essay, or that of the essay on Gal. v. 17.

6. With respect to this gentleman's triumphant question, "Where is the" perfect "man? Why should his name be concealed?" I hope it has already been satisfactorily answered in section iv., argument 12. To what is advanced there, I add here the following remark:—Inveterate prejudice is blind. If it "believe not" reason, "Moses, the prophets," and the apostles, "neither would" it "be persuaded though one rose from the dead." And were we to point at a person as perfect as Jesus of Nazareth, and to say, "Behold the man," I should not wonder if the prepossessed professors cried out, as some ancient engrossers of orthodoxy did, "He is a deceiver of the people, teaching" perfection "throughout all Jewry." And if they did not say, "He is the friend of publicans and sinners, away with him;" it is not improbable they would say, "He is a friend of the pharisees and Arminians, why do you hear him? Would ye also be his disciples?" It is in vain to hope, that prejudice expired with those who scoffed at perfection incarnate, and spit in the face of Jesus Christ; "thinking to do God" and the Messiah "service." Man is man in London, as well as in Jerusalem. Our author goes on:—

THIRD ARGUMENT.—"It is not more essential to those who are partakers of the grace of God in truth, to desire this," the destruction of sin, "than it is for every creature, as such, to desire an exemption from pain and shame." Then follows a dangerous insinuation, that we must say by the cup of indwelling sin, as our Saviour did by the cup of pain and shame, "The cup that my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" Page 18.

ANSWER.—Never was a cup of subtle poison more artfully mixed: and that the reader may not suspect any mischief, the author borrows the very cup which our heavenly Father presented to Christ in the garden of Gethsemane; a cup of pain and shame. Reader, examine this cup before thou drink it. Death is in it. Pour out the new wine which makes the poison it contains palatable, and at the bottom thou wilt find this mortal sediment,—"It

is as absurd absolutely to desire deliverance from sin in this life, as absolutely to desire deliverance from pain and shame." To discover the falsehood of this proposition, we need only weigh the following remarks:—1. Man mixed for himself the moral cup of sin; and God, to punish him, mixed the natural cup of pain and shame. 2. It is excessively wrong so to confound moral and natural evil, as to say, that, because we cannot with any propriety absolutely pray for deliverance from all natural evil in this life, we ought not absolutely to ask and expect deliverance from all moral evil before death. 3. When the imperfectionists confound the moral cup of sin with the natural cup of shame and pain, they are as grossly mistaken, as if they confounded poison and counter-poison; sin, and its punishment; the murderer's revengeful heart, and the gallows on which he is hanged. 4. Shame and pain, when they are appointed for the trial of faith, and endured for righteousness' sake, compose the last and greatest of all the beatitudes; a beatitude this, of which our Lord drank so deeply, when "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the pain," and "despised the shame," of the "cross." Heb. xii. 2. But where was indwelling sin ever ranked among the ingredients which compose the beatitudes, that our opponents should thus confound it with pain and shame? 5. When they insinuate, that we must bear with sin as patiently as with pain and shame, and drink the moral cup of indwelling iniquity as readily as the natural cup of outward affliction, do they not grossly confound "the cup of devils" with the "cup of the Lord," and make the simple believe, that, because we must patiently drink the latter with Christ, we must also patiently drink the former with Belial? The Captain of our salvation bids us "rejoice and be exceeding glad," when we patiently suffer pain and shame for righteousness' sake: therefore, absolutely to deprecate all pain and shame would be to pray against our "exceedingly great joy," yea, against our "reigning with Christ;" for, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." But where does Christ bid us "rejoice and be exceeding glad" when we are full of indwelling sin?

Or where does he promise that if we harbour indwelling sin, "we shall also reign with him?" Christians, awake! We pour out this rank poison before you, that you may advert to its offensive smell. While rash solifidians gather it up, as if it were the honey of Canaan, boldly trample it under foot, and be ye more and more persuaded, that righteousness, Calvinistically imputed, and indwelling sin, are the two arms in which the Delilah of the imperfectionists clasps her deluded admirers.

Page 31, our ingenious author proposes an important question. "If the grace of God," says he, "be so abundant as the scriptures represent it, and the scripture cannot be broken; why are believers permitted to struggle so long for that victory they cannot yet obtain?" that victory which death is to bring them? "Whence is it that they who pant for perfect purity should not immediately obtain a request so desirable?" For our author lays it down as an undoubted truth, that "flesh and spirit mutually lust, desire and strive to obtain a complete conquest, but at present," that is, in this life, "neither can prevail." Page 26.

This important question we answer thus:—Imperfect Christians do not attain perfect purity of heart: 1. Because they do not see the need of it, because they still hug some accursed thing, or because the burden of indwelling sin is not yet become intolerable to them. They make shift to bear it yet, as they do the toothache, when they are still loath to have a rotten tooth pulled out. 2. If they are truly willing to be made clean, they do not yet believe that the Lord both can and will make them clean; or that "now is the day of" this "salvation." And, as faith inherits the promises of God, it is no wonder if their unbelief misses this portion of their inheritance. 3. If they have some faith in the promise, that the Lord can and "will circumcise" their "hearts, that" they "may love him with all their hearts;" yet it is not that kind or degree of faith, which makes them completely willing to sell all, to deny themselves, faithfully to use their inferior talent, and to continue instant in prayer for this very blessing. In short, "they have not, because they ask not," which is the case of the Laodicean imperfectionists;

or "because they ask amiss," which is the case of the imperfect perfectionists. 4. Frequently also they will receive God's blessing in their own preconceived method, and not in God's appointed way. Hence God suspends the operation of his sanctifying Spirit, till they humbly confess their obstinacy and false wisdom, as well as their unbelief and want of perfect love. Thus we clear our Sanctifier, and take the shame of our impurity to ourselves. Not so our opponents. They exculpate themselves, and insinuate, that God has appointed the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in us for life, that the conflict which we maintain with that enemy may answer excellent ends. Their arguments, collected in the above-quoted essay, are produced and answered in the following pages.

FOURTH ARGUMENT.—"By this warfare the Lord manifests and magnifies himself to his people; and, if I am not mistaken," &c., "the continuance of it is a mean by which believers have such views of the perfections and glory of God, as do not seem to us probable they could here obtain without it." Then our author instances in God's "unchanging love towards the elect," and in his "sovereign grace" "that reigns through righteousness to the salvation of the guilty." He next observes, that "those believers who are most conscious of this internal conflict, most sensible of the power and prevalency of indwelling sin, are most thankful that the endearing declarations" of God's "distinguishing love are true." Page 37, &c. And we are indirectly told, the doctrine of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin magnifies "the power and patience of God; the power of God to support us under this conflict, and his patience in bearing with our manifold weakness and ingratitude." For, great as the burden of our ingratitude is, "yet 'he fainteth not, neither is he weary.'" Pages 39, 40.

This is an extract of our author's argument, which, like a snake, works its way through verbose windings, where I have not leisure to follow it. Crush this snake, and out will come this less viper:—The longer sin continues in us, the more God's sovereign love, grace, power, and patience, by which he saves guilty, weak, and ungrateful sinners, is

manifested to us. Or, if you please, The longer we continue in sin, or the longer sin continues in us, the more is grace manifested and magnified. Or, if you will speak as the apostolic controvertist, Let us "continue in sin, that grace may abound;" a notion this which is the very soul of antinomianism unmasked.

To fill the pious reader with a just detestation of this doctrine, I need only unfold it thus: If the continuance of indwelling sin magnifies God's sovereign grace and patience in saving ungrateful sinners, the continuance of outward sin will do this much more; for, the greater our outward sins are, the greater will God's patience appear in bearing with us, and his grace in forgiving us; "seeing he fainteth not, neither is" he "weary." Thus we are come almost to the top of antinomianism; and, to reach the highest step of the fatal ladder, we need only declare, as the author of the Five Letters has done, that "a grievous fall" into sin, which he has instanced in adultery, robbery, murder, and incest, "will make us sing louder to the praise of restoring grace throughout all the ages of eternity." See the fourth of those letters. Now, if a grievous fall will infallibly have that happy effect, it follows, that ten such falls will multiply ten times the display of God's power and patience. What a boundless field opens here, to run an antinomian race, and to enlarge our wickedness as hell! What a ladder is here lent us to descend to the depth of the abomination of desolation, in order to reach the loudest notes of praise in heaven! If this solifidian gospel is not one of the depths of satan, and the greatest too, I am not capable of discerning midnight gloom from noon-day brightness.

FIFTH ARGUMENT.—"To save the guilty in such a manner as," &c., "effectually to humble them who are saved, displays the manifold wisdom of God. Does it not seem necessary, to attain that great end, to make believers experimentally know what an evil and bitter thing sin is?" &c. "If so, when can the objects of salvation see this with becoming shame and sorrow?" Not while they are "in the gall of bitterness," &c.; "for in that state so abominable is man, that he drinketh in iniquity like

water. On the other hand, this cannot be after they are brought to glory ; for then, all the painful and shameful memorials of sin will be finally removed. It must be while flesh and spirit dwell in the same man." Page 41.

Granted : but what has this argument to do with the question ? Did we ever deny that, as long as we live, we must repent, or be deeply conscious what an evil and bitter thing sin is ? The question is, whether indwelling sin is an incentive to true repentance ; and whether God has appointed that this supposed incentive should remain in our hearts till death, lest we should forget "what an evil and bitter thing sin is," or lest we should not remember it "with becoming shame and sorrow ?" The absurdity of this plea has already been exposed in section iii., objections 8, 9. And, to the arguments there advanced, I now add those which follow :—

1. Does not experience convince imperfect believers, that the more fretfulness, self-will, and obstinacy they have in their hearts, the less they do repent ? How absurd is it then to suppose, that the remains of these evil dispositions will help them to feel "becoming shame and sorrow" for sin !

2. Do not our opponents tell their hearers, that we get more "becoming shame and sorrow by looking one moment at Him whom we have pierced, than by poring upon our corruptions for an hour ?" If so, why will they plead for indwelling sin, that "becoming shame and sorrow" may abound ? And why do they pretend, that they exalt Christ more than we, who maintain, that our most "becoming shame and" deepest "sorrow" flow from his ignominy and sufferings, and not from our indwelling sin and conflicting corruptions ? Did not Job "abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes," when he saw his redeeming God by faith, much more than when he just kept his head above the bitter waters of impatience and murmuring ?

3. The pleaders for the continuance of indwelling sin tell us, "that, as the sight and attacks of a living and roaring lion will make us dread lions more than all the descriptions and pictures which represent their destructive fierceness ; so the feeling the onsets of indwelling sin will make us abhor sin more than all the descriptions of its

odious nature, and the accounts of its fearful consequences ; because a burnt child naturally dreads the fire." To this we answer : A burnt child who pleads for the keeping of a burning coal upon his breast, to make him dread the fire, has hitherto been burned to little purpose. Who had ever less to do with indwelling sin and its cursed attacks, than the holy Jesus and faithful angels ? and yet, who is more filled with a perfect abhorrence of all iniquity ? On the other hand, who has been more distracted and longer torn by indwelling sin, than the devil ? and who, nevertheless, is better reconciled to it ? Or who is more plagued by the continual rendings and bitings of the lions and vipers within, than those passionate, revengeful people who say, with all the positiveness of Jonah and Absalom, "I do well to be angry," and, Revenge is sweet ? Experience, therefore, demonstrates the inconclusiveness of this argument.

4. If the penitent thief properly learned in a few hours "what an evil and bitter thing" external and internal "sin is ;" is it not absurd to suppose, that he must have continued forty years full of indwelling sin to learn that lesson, if God had added forty years to his life ? Would this delay have been to the honour of his divine Teacher ?

Lastly : when Christ cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene, did he leave one or two devils behind, to teach her "becoming shame and sorrow" for sin ? And was it these two remaining diabolonians that made her dissolve in tears at Christ's feet, or the grateful, penitential love which she felt for her gracious Deliverer ? Is it not astonishing that gospel ministers should so far forget themselves and their Saviour, as to teach, as openly as for decency they dare, that we must fetch our tears of godly sorrow from the infernal lake, and rekindle the candle of repentance at the fire of hell ? and that the fanning breath of the Spirit, and the golden, hallowed snuffers of the sanctuary, cannot make that candle burn continually clear, unless we use, to the end of our life, the black finger of satan,—indwelling sin ; and Adam's accursed extinguisher,—original corruption ?

SIXTH ARGUMENT.—Our author's next argument in

favour of the necessary indwelling of sin during life is more decent, and, consequently, more dangerous. The cloven feet of error delicately wear the sandals of truth; but, with a little attention, we shall soon see that they are only borrowed or stolen. The argument abridged from page 44, and rendered more perspicuous, may run thus: "If we have frequently been slothful, and have not at all times exerted our abilities to the uttermost, why may not God in wisdom rebuke us for it, and make us sensible of that evil by not permitting us to effect what at other times we seem determined, if possible, to accomplish?" that is, by not permitting us utterly to abolish the whole body of sin? "If Samson abuse his strength, it is fit he should have cause severely to reflect on his folly by being deprived of it for a season, and become as weak as other men." Here we are left to infer, that as Samson, through his unfaithfulness, became "as weak as other men" for a season, so all believers, on account of their unfaithfulness, must be weakened by indwelling sin during the term of life.

To this we answer: 1. That although believers frequently give place to sloth and unfaithfulness, yet they are no more necessitated to do it than Samson was to dally with Delilah. 2. If the constant indwelling of sin is a just punishment for not making a proper use of the talent of grace which God gives us, it evidently follows, that our unfaithfulness, and not a necessity appointed by God, is the very worm which destroys our evangelically-sinless perfection; and the moment our opponents grant this, they allow all that we contend for, unless they should be able to prove, that God necessitates us to be unfaithful, in order to punish us infallibly with indwelling sin for life.

As for Samson, he is most unfortunately brought in to support the doctrine of the necessary indwelling of that weakening sin, which we call "inbred corruption;" and he might be most happily produced to encourage those unfaithful believers who, like him, have not made a proper use of their strength in time past; for he outlived his penal weakness, and recovered the strength of a perfect

Nazarite before death ; witness his last achievement, which exceeded all his former exploits. For it would be highly absurd to suppose, that he got in a death-purgatory the amazing strength by which he pulled down the pillars that supported the large building where the Philistines feasted. Nor need I the strength of a logical Samson to break the argumentative reeds which support the temple of error, in which the imperfectionists make sport to their hurt with the doctrine of that Christian Samson who said, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

SEVENTH ARGUMENT.—We are indirectly told,—for pious men cannot utter gross antinomianism without the mask of circumlocution,—that indwelling sin must continue in us, that "grace may not only be exercised, but distinguished from all that has only the appearance of it. But how is the true grace of God to be here distinguished from that which is but the semblance of it? By its effects, a clear and spiritual discovery of the depravity, deceit, and desperate wickedness of our own hearts." Page 47, &c. And then we are given to understand, that, lest we should not be deeply convinced of that desperate wickedness, the continuance of indwelling sin is absolutely necessary. This argument runs into the fifth, which I have already answered. It is another indirect plea for the continuance of outward adultery and murder, as well as for the continuance of indwelling sin ; it being certain that outward adultery, &c., will convince us of the desperate wickedness of our hearts, still more powerfully than heart-adultery, &c. To what hard shifts are good men put when they fight for the continuance of the bud or root of any sin ! Their every stroke for sin is a stab at the very vitals of godliness.

EIGHTH ARGUMENT.—The continuance of indwelling sin, which is, with great modesty in the ingenious author, and therefore with great danger to the unwary reader, called "this warfare," is supported by the following reason : "It is often an occasion to discover the strength of grace received, as well as the truth of it." Page 48, &c. This argument is all of a piece with the preceding, and

puts me in mind of a speech which a shameless young debauchee made once to me : "I kept," said he, "drinking and dozing in such a tavern without ever going to bed, or being ever sober one hour, for twenty-three days. I never had so remarkable an occasion to discover the strength of my body, and the excellence of my constitution." However, in a few months, while he continued in the "occasion to discover his strength," a mortal disorder seized upon him, and, by removing him into eternity, taught me, that if Fulsome the professor speaks the truth when he says, "Once in grace, always in grace ;" Nabal the sot was mistaken when he hinted, "Once in health, always in health." To make the imperfectionists ashamed of this argument, I hope I need only observe : 1. That nothing ever showed more the strength of grace than the conflicts which the man Christ Jesus went through, though he never conflicted a moment with indwelling sin. 2. That the strength and excellence of a remedy is much better discovered by the removal of the disorder which it is designed to cure, than by the conflicts which the poor patient has with pain till death come to terminate his misery. And, 3. That the argument I refute indirectly represents Christ as a physician who keeps his patients upon the rack to render himself more necessary to them, and to show the strength of the anodyne mixture by which he gives them now and then a little ease under their continued, racking pain.

Our author adds : "If those who bear the heaviest burdens are sometimes esteemed the strongest men, they who are thus engaged in this warfare" (I wish he would speak quite out, and say, "they who bear the heaviest burden of indwelling sin") "have that evidence of the strength of grace," &c., "which is peculiar to themselves." Page 49. A great mistake this ; for, if we may believe Ovid, when Medea murdered her own child, under a severe conflict with indwelling sin, she "had that" fatal "evidence of" what is here preposterously called "the strength of grace," but what I beg leave to call "the obstinacy of free will." *Sed trahit invitam nova vis*, &c. : "Passion," said she, "hurries away my unwilling, reluc-

tant mind." Judas, it seems, was not an utter stranger to this conflict, any more than to the burden of guilt, when he hurried out of it into a death-purgatory. Nor do I blame him for having "chosen strangling rather than life," if death can terminate the misery which accompanies indwelling sin, and do more, in that respect, for fallen believers, than Christ himself ever did. But, supposing that "the saving grace of God" which "has appeared to all men," never appeared to Medea and Judas; supposing these two sinful souls never conflicted with indwelling sin; it will, however, follow, from our author's insinuation, that in case David had defiled half a dozen married women, and killed their husbands to enjoy them without a rival, we should esteem him six times stronger in grace, if he had not fainted under his sixfold burden, like Judas; because, "in this" antinomian "warfare, those who bear the heaviest burdens, are esteemed the strongest" believers; and because "they have that testimony of their love to Christ which is peculiar to themselves." If Satan was to transform himself into an angel of light, could he preach a more dangerous and immoral gospel to an antinomian and perverse generation?

NINTH ARGUMENT.—Our author's last argument in favour of the necessary continuance of sin in us, occurs page 51, and runs thus:—"I will only add, that by this warfare the Lord weans his people from the present evil world, and makes them long for the land of promise, as the land of rest," &c. "I know some will say, 'This is impossible;' and be ready to ask, 'Are we, then, debtors to the flesh?'" A very proper question; which the author answers thus:—"By no means," &c.:—"In our flesh dwells no good thing," &c. "Nevertheless, he" (God) "can, and does, make the presence of evil so irksome to the believer, that it makes him ardently long for complete deliverance from it." That is, in plain English, he keeps his patients so long upon the rack of their indwelling sin, that, at last, they are forced to long for death, the great cleanser from heart-iniquity. This argument would have been complete, if it had been supported by these two passages:—"I do well to be angry, even unto death." "In

those days, men," plagued by the locusts which ascend out of the bottomless pit, "shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." To show its absurdity, I need only make two or three remarks upon it.

1. Mark the inconsistency of our opponents. When they hear us press obedient faith upon a fallen or wavering believer, by mentioning to him the terrors of the Lord, the fear of losing the divine favour, and the danger of being even spued out of Christ's mouth, and condemned without mercy, if they show no mercy, they say, that enforcing the love of Christ on a disobedient believer will abundantly answer all the good ends which we propose by thus preaching Christ's law. But when they plead for the continuance of sin, they forget their own doctrine, and tell us, that indwelling sin is necessary to keep us in the way of duty, namely, in an ardent longing for heaven. They blame us for making use of Christ's law to spur believers, and yet they, (see to what astonishing height their partiality is grown!) they do not blush to preach openly the law of sin to believers; insisting, that its working in their members is necessary to "make them long for the land of promise, as the land of rest, and for the speedy possession of that great good which God has laid up for them." Page 52. We are heretics for preaching the law of Christ—the law of liberty; and they who preach the law of sin—the law of bondage—are orthodox, and engross to themselves the glorious title of "gospel ministers."

2. How absurd is it to prop up the throne of indwelling sin in the heart of believers, that its tyrannical law may make them long for heaven! Did not Christ long for heaven without indwelling sin? Do not the holiest believers who are most free from indwelling sin, long most for the beatific vision? And do we not see, that fallen believers, who are most filled with indwelling sin, are most apt to be "lovers of" sin and "the world, more than lovers of God" and heaven? Are they not the very people who, unmindful of Lot's wife, stay in the plain, instead of escaping for their life, and fleeing to the celestial mount of God, without ever looking behind them?

3. Is not indwelling sin a clog, rather than a spur, to the heavenly racers? If sin is of such service to us, to make us run the career of holy longing after heavenly rest, why does the apostle exhort us to "set aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us?" If we want a spur to make us mend our pace, need we keep the spur indwelling sin? Is it not more likely to spur us to hell, than to heaven? If we have thousands of sinless spurs, what need have we of keeping that to drive us to heaven which drove Adam behind the trees of the garden, not to say, out of his native paradise?

If you ask, "What are the sinless spurs of believers?" we reply, All the toils, infirmities, and pains of our weary, decaying, mortal bodies; all the troubles, disappointments, and sorrows which arise as naturally out of our present circumstances, as sparks do out of the fire; a share of the dreadful temptations which harassed Christ in the wilderness; and frequent tastes of the bitter cup which made him sweat blood in the garden, and cry out on Calvary. Hear one to whom our opponents absurdly give the spur of indwelling sin, as if he had not spurring enough without it: "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh." Col. i. 24. And surely indwelling sin was never one of Christ's afflictions. Again: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall it be tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Once more: "Some were tortured, not accepting deliverance; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

I grant, that all true believers have not these thorns in the flesh, and feel not the spurs which made Elijah flee for his life before incensed Jezebel, and request

that he might die under the juniper-tree : but, at the best of times, they have, or should have, David's affliction : "My eyes run down with water, because men keep not thy law." They have, or should have, Jeremiah's grief : "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night" for the desolations of Jerusalem, or "for the slain of the daughter of God's people !" They have, or should have, the sorrow of just Lot, who was "vexed from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked among whom he dwelt." To suppose, therefore, that in this vale of tears, tribulation, and sin, we need keep the sting of indwelling sin, because we must "strive against" the "sin" which is in the world, to the end, even "unto blood," if we are called to secure the crown of martyrdom ; or because it "is the will of God, that through much tribulation we should enter the kingdom," page 46 ; and because we should long for heaven : to suppose, I say, that we must keep the sting, indwelling sin, on these accounts, is as absurd as to suppose, that all the keepers and nurses in bedlam must be mad, and must continue to be plagued with personal lunacy, lest they should not strive against madness to the end ; lest they should not come out of great disturbances when they remove from their dreary habitation ; and lest, while they continue there, they should not see mad people enough to make them long for the conversation of reasonable persons.

TENTH ARGUMENT.—Our author closes his shrewd plea for the death-purgatory, by proposing a very material objection : "If any exclaim and say, 'These sentiments have a tendency to reconcile believers to sin,' I must say, The flesh might as soon be reconciled to the Spirit, as the Spirit to the flesh ; or sin to grace, as grace to sin. It is often said that 'nature will be nature.' And why may not this be applied to the divine nature, of which believers are said to be partakers ?" Page 52. Hence our author insinuates, that the divine nature of believers is immutable ; and that, because "to will is present with them." when they sin they still retain God's holiness, as "lions

and tigers, however confined or caressed, retain their ferocity and brutal appetites."

I am glad to see, that this pious author has still the cause of holiness at heart, and desires to stop up the antinomian gap. I am persuaded, that he intends to do God service, by pleading for the continuance of indwelling sin. If he asks for the reprieve of that robber and murderer, it is merely because antinomianism has deceived him, as formerly pharisaism deceived the Jews, who cried, "Release unto us Barabbas." If he saw, that Christ in us must be crucified afresh, in case the robber in us is not put to death; I doubt not but he would be as sorry for his publication, as the devout Jews were for their anti-christian request, when they were "pricked to the heart," on the day of pentecost.

But, alas! if a good intention excuses bad performances, it does not stop their mischief. The very desire which our author evidences to secure godliness is so unfortunately expressed, that it gives her as fatal a blow as the tempter did, when he said to our first parents, "Ye shall not surely die." For, when that gentleman intimates to fallen believers, "Ye are possessed of the divine nature; and, be your works what they will, if 'to will be,' in some degree, 'present,'" page 54, "ye are as much possessed of God's holy image, as a lion is possessed of a lion's fierce nature;" what is this, but to preach the very gospel which the serpent preached in paradise? with this difference, that the serpent said, "Ye shall not die: ye shall be as gods;" but the imperfectionists say, "Your salvation is finished; ye have already the 'immutable nature' of God: ye are already as gods." Adam believed the tempter, and lost his holy nature. The imperfectionists believe our author: O may none of them remain "immutable," in the sinful imperfection which he so earnestly contends for!

XI. A caveat. Having said so much upon our author's mistakes, I should be inexcusable, if I did not drop a caution about the veil with which they are covered. His book goes into the world under the harmless title of "The Christian's peculiar Conflict;" whereas it should be

called, "A Plea for the Propriety and Usefulness of the Continuance of indwelling Sin in all Christians." This plain, artless title would have made true Christians stand upon their guard: but now they take up without suspicion the cup mixed by the author; and it is well if some have not already drank it to the dregs without fear.

An illustration will give the reader an idea of the wisdom with which the title of this essay is contrived. I write a treatise full upon the advantage of a standing rebellion in the kingdom, and urge a variety of plausible arguments to show the great good that will arise from an inveterate opposition to the government. "If a spirit of rebellion ceases in any subject, the king's patience, mercy, love, and power, will not be so fully displayed, nor will the loyalty of his good subjects be so well distinguished and proved. Rebellion, and the burdens that attend it, will make us long for peace. Guilty, ungrateful rebels will love the king, and admire his mercy, the more when they are forgiven after their manifold rebellions. And therefore, to use the unguarded words of our author, page 53, 'it becomes us seriously to consider how far this great end' (of a spirit of rebellion continually dwelling in every Briton's breast) 'is understood, approved, and answered.'" I show my manuscript to a friend, who says: "Your essay will alarm every well-wisher to the constitution of the realm." But I remove his objection by saying, I will not call it "An Essay on the Propriety and Usefulness of a Spirit of Rebellion constantly harboured in the Breast of every one of his Majesty's Subjects;" but I will call it, "The Loyal Subject's peculiar Conflict; an Essay on 1 Sam. xii. 19," and this plausible title will modestly make way for my boldest arguments. Pleas for the continuance of rebellion and indwelling sin may properly enough be introduced by such a stratagem.

SECTION XV

HAVING taken my leave of the ingenious author of "The Christian's peculiar Conflict," I return to Mr. Hill, who, by this time meets me with his Review in his hand, and with that theological sling casts at our doctrine a stone which has indeed frightened thousands of weak souls, but has never done any execution amongst the judicious. "Your doctrine," says he, "is a popish doctrine;" and he might have added with as much reason, that it is a Pelagian doctrine too; for bold as Pelagius and some popes have been in coining new doctrines, they never came to such a pitch of boldness, as to say that they were the authors of the doctrine of evangelical obedience, and of those commandments which bind us to love God, our covenant-God, with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves; precious gospel commandments these, upon which the doctrine of perfection securely rests.

What pope was ever silly enough to pretend that he wrote the book of Deuteronomy, where we find this sweet evangelical law?—"Hear, O Israel: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ~~all~~ thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart," to do them, I suppose, and not to ridicule them under the names of perfection and popery! Deut. vi. 4—6. Now by what argument will Mr. Hill prove that the pope is the inventor of this blessed doctrine?

Should that gentleman reply, that when God gave his ancient people this gracious law of perfection, he did not give it with an intention that they should personally keep it as an evangelical law; but only with an intention to drive them to the promised Messiah, who was to keep it for them, and to give eternal indulgences to all the believers who break it; we demand a proof; and till Mr. Hill produces it, we show his mistake by the following arguments:—1. Although the Jewish dispensation revealed a "gracious God, abundant in goodness, mercy, and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," to returning

sinner who penitentially laid hold on his Jewish covenant; yet, if I remember right, it never promised to accept of an obedience performed by another. Hence it is, that God never commanded that Jewish females should be circumcised; but confined his ordinance to the males, who alone could personally obey it. We frequently read of vicarious suffering in the Jewish gospel, but not of vicarious obedience and vicarious love. For although the obedience of godly parents engaged God to bestow many blessings upon their children; yet the children were to obey for themselves, or to be cut off in the end. The Jews were undone by a conceit of the contrary doctrine, and by wild notions about the obedience of Abraham, and the holiness of the temple, which they fancied was imputed to them in the Calvinian way. And a similar mistake, it is to be feared, undoes still, multitudes of Christians, who fatally mistake the nature of Christian obedience, absurdly put on robes of self-imputed righteousness, and rashly bespatter the robes of personal and evangelically-perfect obedience, which God requires of every one of us.

2. The mistake I expose would never have been made by our opponents, if they had not used themselves to tear the evangelically-legal part of the scriptures from the context, in order to give it a sense contrary to that of the sacred writers; it being certain that when you have torn a man's tongue out of his mouth, you may afterwards force it down his throat, and leave it there with the root against his teeth, and the tip towards his stomach. To show that the precept of perfect love, which I have quoted from Deut. vi., is treated in this manner, as often as our opponents insinuate, God did not intend that Jewish believers should personally observe it as a term of final acceptance, but only that they should be driven thereby to the mediator, who should perfectly love God for them: to show, I say, the absurdity of this notion, we need only do Moses the justice to hear him out. Let any unprejudiced person read the whole chapter, and he will, I am persuaded, side against the Calvinian imputation of a Jewish perfection to Jewish believers. Moses begins by

saying, "Now these are the commandments which the Lord your God," yours through an evangelical covenant, "commanded to teach you, that ye might do them," and not that your mediator might do them for you. Deut. vi. 1. Two verses after, he adds, "Hear, O Israel, and observe, and do," (not, "Hear, O Israel, and another shall observe and do for thee,") "that it may be well with thee." Then comes our capital doctrine and precept of perfect love, which, a few verses below, Moses continues to enforce thus:—"Ye shall not tempt the Lord your" covenant "God." "You shall diligently keep the" evangelical "commands of the Lord your" covenant "God; and his" gospel "testimonies, which he has commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord thy God, that it may be well with thee." "And when thy son asketh thee, saying, What do mean these statutes" of perfect love? &c.: "then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out." And, lest antinomian hands should draw the golden nail of this perfect obedience for want of proper clinching, this precious chapter, which our church has properly selected for a Sunday lesson, ends with these words, which must raise a blush on the face, or strike conviction into the breast, of all who trample under foot the robes of our own evangelical perfection: "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, that he might preserve us alive;" "and it shall be our righteousness," our gospel perfection, "if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our" covenant "God, as he has commanded us." Deut. vi. 1—25.

If our opponents say, that "this is a transcript of Adam's anti-mediatorial law of paradisiacal perfection, and not a copy of Moses's mediatorial law of Jewish perfection;" or if they assert, that "Moses Calvinistically hints, that the Jews were to keep this law by proxy;" they may say, that "light is darkness." And if they grant, that Moses was no antinomian shuffler, but really meant what he spoke and wrote, it unavoidably follows, 1. That God really required of every Jew an evangelical and personal perfection of love, according to the degree of

light and power imparted under the Jewish dispensation. 2. That this evangelical, Jewish perfection of love was attainable by every sincere Jew ; because, whatever God requires of us in a covenant of grace, he graciously engages himself to help us to perform, if we believingly and obediently embrace his promised assistance. And, 3. That if an evangelical perfection of love was attainable under the Jewish gospel, (for the gospel was preached to the Jews as well as to us, although not so clearly, Heb. iv. 2,) it is absurd to deny, that the gospel of Christ requires less perfection, or makes less provision, that Christians may attain what their dispensation calls them to.

If Mr. Hill thinks, that this inference is not just, I refer him to our Lord's declaration : "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil ;" first, by perfectly obeying myself the two great moral precepts of Moses and the prophets ; and next, by teaching and helping all my faithful disciples to do the same. Matt. v. 17. Should that gentleman object to the latter part of this little comment, because it leaves no room for the Calvinian imputation of Christ's mediatorial perfection to fallen believers, who sleep in impenitency, under the guilt of adultery, covered by murder ; we reply, that this part of our exposition, far from being forced, is highly agreeable to the text, when it is taken in connexion with the scope of our Lord's sermon, and with the context. For,

1. All Christ's sermons, and especially that upon the mount, inculcate the doctrine of personal perfection, and not the doctrine of imputed perfection. 2. The very chapter out of which this text is taken ends with these words, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And Mr. Hill, prejudiced as he is against our doctrine, is too candid to assert, that our Lord meant, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. Now, he is perfect only by the Calvinian imputation of my righteousness : it is merely by imputation that 'he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good ;' and he 'sendeth' only a Calvinistically-imputed

‘rain upon the just and upon the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect’ only by the imputation of my perfect righteousness.”

Mr. Hill’s mistake has not only no countenance from the distant part of the context, but it is flatly contrary to the words which immediately follow the controverted text: “For verily I say unto you,” that, far from being come to destroy the law and the prophets, that is, the spirituality and strictness of the moral part of the Jewish gospel, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, which pharisaic glosses have unnerved, “till all be fulfilled.” And lest you should think, that I speak of your fulfilling this law by proxy or imputation, I add: “Whosoever shall break one of these commandments,”—which I am going to enforce upon you, as my own mediatorial law, though hitherto you have considered them only as Moses’s mediatorial law,—“whosoever,” I say, “shall break one of these least commandments, and,” by precept and example, “teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven:” if he has any place among my people in my spiritual kingdom, it shall be only among my carnal babes, who are the least of my subjects. “But whosoever shall do and teach them,”—the commandments whose spirituality I am going to assert,—“the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven;” he shall be an adult perfect Christian in the kingdom of my grace here, and he shall receive a proportionable crown of righteousness in the kingdom of my glory hereafter. Matt. v. 18, 19.

If I am not mistaken, it evidently follows from these plain words of Christ, 1. That he taught a personal perfection, and an evangelically-sinless perfection too. 2. That this perfection consists in not breaking, by wilful omission, the least of the commandments which our Lord rescued both from the false glosses of antinomian pharisees, who rested on the imputed righteousness of Abraham, saying, “We have Abraham for our father:” we are the children of Abraham: we are perfect in Abraham: all our perfection is in Abraham.” And from the no less false glosses of those absurdly-legal pharisees, who paid

the tithe of anise, mint, and cummin with the greatest scrupulosity, whilst they secretly neglected mercy, truth, and the love of God. And, 3. That the perfection which Christ enforced upon his disciples was not merely of the negative kind, but of the positive also, since it consisted both in doing and in teaching the least, as well as the greatest, of God's commandments.

If you ask, What are the greatest of these commandments which Christ says his disciples must "do and teach," if they will be great or perfect in his kingdom and dispensation? St. Matthew answers: "One of the pharisees, who was a lawyer, asked him a question, saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" the name then given to the Jewish gospel which Moses preached. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it" in nature and importance, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;" Matt. xxii. 35—40; that is, whatever Moses and the other prophets taught and promised hangs on the nail of perfect love; all came from, all tended to, perfect love, under the Jewish dispensation. Nor is my dispensation less holy and gracious; on the contrary, "what the law could not do," in a manner sufficiently perfect for my dispensation, (for Jewish perfection is not the highest perfection at which man may arrive on earth,) "God sending me into the world for" the atonement and destruction of "sin, has" hereby abundantly "condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the" mediatorial "law," which enjoins perfect love, "might be" abundantly "fulfilled in" the hearts of "them that walk after the spirit" of my gospel; a brighter gospel this, which transmits more direct and warmer beams from the Sun of Righteousness, and can raise the exquisitely-delicious fruit of perfect love to a greater perfection, than the gospel which Moses preached. Compare Rom. viii. 3 with Heb. iv. 2. See also an account of the superiority of Christ's gospel in the Scripture Scales, section vi.

Agreeably to this doctrine of perfection, our Lord said to the rich young man, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: if thou wilt be perfect, follow me" in the way of my commandments; "love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." For "blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may enter through the gate into the city, and have right to the tree of life which is in the street of that city, on either side of the pure river of the water of life. This do, and thou shalt live" eternally in heaven. "Bring forth fruit unto perfection," according to the talents of grace and power which thou art entrusted with, and thou shalt "inherit eternal life," thou shalt "receive the reward of the inheritance," thou shalt "receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him" with the love which keepeth the commandments, and fulfilleth the royal law. Compare Matt. xix. 17; Luke x. 28; Rev. xxii. 2, 14; James i. 12; and Luke viii. 14.

On these and the above-mentioned scriptures we rest the truth and importance of the doctrine of perfection. Jewish perfection principally stands or falls with Deut. vi. and Matt. xxii.; and Christian perfection with Matt. v. and xix., to which you may add the joint testimony of St. Paul and St. James. The former, whom our opponents absurdly make the captain of their imperfection, says to the Judaizing Galatians, "Bear ye one another's burdens," (a rare instance of perfect love!) "and so fulfil the" mediatorial "law of Christ." Gal. vi. 2. Nor let Mr. Hill say, that the apostle means we should fulfil it by proxy; for St. Paul adds in the next verse but one, "Let every man prove his own work, and then" (with respect to that work) "he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for" (with regard to personal, evangelical obedience) "every man shall bear his own burden;" a proverbial expression, which answers to this gospel axiom, "Every man shall be judged according to his own works."

St. Paul urges the same evangelical and lawful doctrine upon the Romans: "Love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou

shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not covet ; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 8, &c. And that St. Paul spake this of the mediatorial law of liberty and Christian perfection, and not of the Christless law of innocence and paradisiacal perfection, is evident from his calling it "the law of Christ," that is, our Redeemer's law, in opposition to our Creator's law, which was given without an atoning sacrifice and a mediating priest, and therefore made no allowance for infirmities, and admitted neither of repentance nor of renovated obedience. Besides, St. Paul was not such a novice as not to know, that the Galatians and the Romans, who had all sinned, as he observes, Rom. iii. 23, could never be exhorted by any man in his senses, to fulfil the paradisiacal law of innocence by now loving one another. He therefore indubitably spake of the gracious law of our gentle Melchizedek ;—the law of him who said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John xiii. 34. A precious commandment this, which our Lord calls "new," not because the Jewish mediator had not given it to the Israelites, but because the Christian Mediator enforced it by new motives, gave new, unparalleled instances of obedience to it, annexed new rewards to the keeping of it, and required it to be fulfilled with a new perfection ; and that Christians shall be eternally saved or damned according to their keeping or breaking this mediatorial law of Christian perfection, this "law of Christ," this royal law of "Jesus, the King of the Jews," we prove by Matt. xviii. 35 ; vii. 26 ; xxv. 45 ; and Luke vi. 46, &c.

If Mr. Hill's prejudices are not removed by what St. Paul says in Rom. xiii. concerning our fulfilling the gospel law of perfection ; we entreat him to ponder the glorious testimony which the apostle in Rom. ii. bears to this law, which he does not scruple to call his "gospel." With regard to this gracious rule of judgment says he, "There is no respect of persons with God. For as many as

have sinned without a" mediator's written "law, shall also perish without a" mediator's written "law; and as many as have sinned in" or under a mediator's written "law, shall be judged by the" mediator's written "law. For not the hearers of the" mediator's "law are just before God, but the doers of the" mediator's "law shall be justified." Nor are the heathens totally destitute of this law: "For when the gentiles, which have not the" mediator's written "law, do by nature" (by natural conscience, which is the echo of the mediator's voice, and the reflection of the light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world); "when the gentiles," I say, "do" by that means "the things contained in the" mediator's "law, they, having not the" mediator's "law, are" the mediator's "law unto themselves; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts" (in consequence of the witness borne) "accusing or else excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel," that is, according to the gospel law which I preach. Rom. ii. 11, &c. For, while some "lay up treasures in heaven," others "treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing," or in keeping the mediator's law according to their dispensation, "seek for glory," he will render "eternal life," like a righteous judge, and gracious rewarder of them that diligently seek him. "But unto them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness," he will render "indignation and wrath," in just proportion to the more or less bright discoveries of the truth which have been made to them. Rom. ii. 5, &c. For "that servant who" clearly "knew his Lord's will," by a written law delivered through the hands of a mediator, "and prepared not himself" that he might have boldness in the day of judgment, "neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" in the hell of unbelieving Jews and disobedient Christians. "But he that knew not" his master's will by an outwardly-written law, "and did" break the law

of nature, disobey the voice of his conscience, and "commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Luke xii. 47, 48. An indubitable proof this, that, as something is required of all, something, even a talent of grace, a measure of the spiritual light which enlightens every man, is given to all to improve with, and bring forth fruit to perfection, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and others a hundredfold, according to their respective dispensations.

From these quotations it appears to us indubitable, that the gospel of St. Paul, and, of consequence, the gospel of Christ, is not a wanton, lawless gospel, but an holy, lawful gospel, in which evangelical promises are properly guarded by evangelical rules of judgment; and the doctrines of grace wisely connected with the doctrines of justice. If this is a glaring truth, what a dangerous game do many good men play when they emasculate St. Paul's gospel, and with antinomian rashness cut off and cast away that morally-legal part of it which distinguishes it both from the ceremonial gospel, which the Galatians foolishly embraced, and from the lawless gospel, which solifidian gossellers contend for, under the perverted name of "free grace!" And how seriously should we all consider these awful words of St. Paul! "There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ; but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you," whether it be a more severe Judaizing gospel, or a less strict solifidianizing gospel, "than that which we have preached unto you," which stands at an equal distance from burdensome Jewish ceremonies, and from lawless solifidian tenets, "let him be accursed." Gal. i. 7, 8.

This recapitulation of the principal scripture-proofs of our doctrine would be exceedingly deficient, if I did not once more remind the reader of the glorious testimony which St. James bears to the law of liberty: "If ye" believers, says he, "fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well;" ye quit yourselves like perfect Christians: "but

if ye have" uncharitably "respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors;" that is, ye are condemned by the mediator's law, under which ye are. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law" of the mediator, "and yet" uncharitably "offend in one point, he is guilty of all," &c. "So speak ye therefore, and so do, as people that shall be judged by the law of liberty," the mediator's law. "For he" (the imperfect, uncharitable, fallen believer) "shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no" charity, or "mercy." James ii. 8—13.

We rest our doctrine of Jewish and Christian perfection on these consentaneous testimonies of St. James and St. Paul; of Moses, the great lawgiver of the Jews, and of Christ, the great Lawgiver of the Christians; the doctrine of perfection, or of perfectly cordial obedience, being inseparably connected with the mediatorial laws of Moses and of Christ. The moment you destroy these laws, by turning them into "rules of life," through the personal observance of which no believer shall ever be justified or condemned, you destroy the ground of Jewish and Christian perfection, and you impose upon us the lawless, unscriptural tenet of an obedience performed by proxy, and of an imputed perfection, which will do us as little good in life, death, and judgment, as imputed health, opposed to inherent health, will do to a poor, sickly, dying criminal. Thus, after leading my reader around a large circle of proofs, I return to the very point whence I started. See the beginning of the preface. And I conclude, that a gospel without a mediatorial law, without an evangelical law, without the conditional promise of a crown of heavenly glory to the obedient, and without the conditional threatening of infernal stripes to the disobedient; I conclude, I say, that such a gospel will always lead us to the centre of antinomianism; to the Diana and Hecate of the Calvinists; to lawless free grace and everlasting free wrath; or, if you please, to finished salvation and finished damnation. On the other hand, the moment you admit what the Jewish and Christian gospel covenants are so express about,—I mean, an evangelical law, or a prac-

licable rule of judgment, as well as of conduct,—eternal salvation and eternal damnation become conditional; they are suspended upon the evangelical perfection or imperfection of our obedience; and the Rev. Mr. Berridge hits on the head the golden nail on which “hang all the law and the prophets,” all the four gospels and the epistles, when he says, “Sincere obedience, as a condition, will lead you unavoidably up to perfect obedience.”

And now, reader, choose which thou wilt follow, Mr. Hill’s lawless antinomian gospel, or St. Paul and St. James’s gospel, including the evangelical law of Christian liberty and perfection, by which law thou shalt be conditionally justified or condemned, “when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” Rom. ii. 16. If thou choose imputed righteousness and imputed perfection without any condition, it will unavoidably lead thee down into a death-purgatory, through the chambers of indwelling sin, if thou art an elect, in the Calvinian sense of the word; or to eternal damnation, through the chambers of necessary sin, if thou art one of those whom our opponents call “reprobates.” But if thou cordially choose the sincere, voluntary, evangelical obedience of faith, which we preach both as a condition and as a privilege, it will, Mr. Hill’s second being judge, “unavoidably lead thee up to perfect obedience.” There is absolutely no medium between these two gospels. Thou must be either a Crispian, lawless imperfectionist, or an evangelical, lawful perfectionist; unless thou choose to be a Gallo, —one who cares for none of these things. Thou must wrap thyself up in unscriptural notions of imputed righteousness, imputed holiness, and imputed obedience, which make up the ideal garment of Calvinistically-imputed perfection; or thou must perfectly wash in the blood of the Lamb thy robes of inherent, though derived, righteousness, holiness, and obedience, which, when they are thus washed, are the rich wedding garment of evangelical perfection.

SECTION XVI.

WE have proved, in the preceding section, that the doctrine of an evangelically-sinless perfection is truly scriptural, being inseparably connected with the greatest and most excellent precepts of the old and new testaments, and with the most evangelical and awful sanctions of Moses and Jesus Christ. This might suffice to show, that our doctrine of perfection cannot be called "popish" or "Pelagian," with any more candour than the doctrine of the Trinity can be branded with those epithets, because Pelagius and the pope embrace it. If, in order to be good protestants, we were obliged to renounce all that the Jews, Turks, and infidels hold, we should renounce the old testament, because the Jews revere it; we should renounce the unity of God, because the Mahometans contend for it; nay, we should renounce common humanity, because all infidels approve it. I beg leave, however, to dwell a moment more upon Mr. Hill's objection, that the pope holds our doctrine.

When this gentleman was at Rome, he may remember, that his cicerone showed him, in the ancient church of St. Paul without the Gate, if I remember the name right, the pictures of all the popes, from St. Peter, Linus, Cletus, and Clement, down to the pope who then filled what is called "St. Peter's chair." According to this view of papacy, Mr. Hill is certainly in the right; for if he turns back to section v., he will see that Peter, the first pope, so called, was a complete perfectionist; and if Clemens, or St. Clement, Paul's fellow-labourer, was really the fourth pope, it is certain, that he also held our doctrine, as well as Peter and Christ, for he wrote to the Corinthians, "By love were all the elect of God made perfect. Those who were made perfect in love are in the region of the just, and shall appear in glory. Happy, then, are we, if we fulfil the commandments of God in the unity of love. Following the commandments of God, they sin not." (St. Clement's epistle to the Corinthians.) This glorious testimony, which St. Clement bears to the doctrine of

perfection, might be supported by many correspondent quotations from the other fathers. But as this would too much swell this essay, I shall only produce one, which is so much the more remarkable, as it is taken from St. Jerome's third dialogue against Pelagius, the rigid, over-doing perfectionist : *Hoc et nos dicimus, posse hominem non peccare, si velit, pro tempore, pro loco, pro imbecillitate corporea, quamdiu intentus est animus, quamdiu chorda nulla vitio laxatur in cithará* ; that is, "We," who oppose Pelagius's notions about Adamic perfection, "maintain also that, considering our time, place, and bodily weakness, we can avoid sinning, if we will, as long as our mind is bent upon it, and the string of our harp," that is, of our Christian resolution, "is not slackened by any wilful fault."

When I read these blessed testimonies in favour of the truth which we vindicate, my pleased mind flies to Rome, and I am ready to say, Hail ! ye holy popes and fathers, ye perfect servants of my perfect Lord ! I am ambitious to share with you the names of "Arminian, Pelagian, papist, temporary monster, and atheist in masquerade." I publish to the world my steadfast resolution to follow you, and any of your successors, who have done and taught Christ's commandments. And I enter my protest against the mistakes of the ministers who teach that Christ's law is impracticable, that sin must dwell in our hearts as long as we live, and that we must continue to break the Lord's precepts in our inward parts unto death.

I shall close my answer to this argument of Mr. Hill, by a quotation from Mr. Wesley's Remarks upon the Review :—"It" (our doctrine of Christian perfection) "has been condemned by the pope and his whole conclave, even in this present century. In the famous bull *Unigenitus* they utterly condemn the uninterrupted act" (of faith and love, which some then talked of, of continually rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks) "as dreadful heresy !" If we have Peter and Clement on our side, we are willing to let Mr. Hill screen his doctrine behind the pope who issued out the bull *Unigenitus*, and, if he pleases, behind the present pope too.

“However,” says Mr. Hill, “the distinction between sins and innocent infirmities is derived from the Romish church.”

ANSWER.—1. We rejoice, if the church of Rome was never so unreasonable, and so deluded by antinomian popes, as to confound an involuntary, wandering thought, an undesigned mistake, and a lamented fit of drowsiness at prayer, with adultery, murder, and incest; in order to represent Christ’s mediatorial law as absolutely impracticable; and to insinuate that fallen believers, who actually commit the above-mentioned crimes, are God’s dear children, as well as the obedient believers who labour under the above-described infirmities.

2. We apprehend that Mr. Hill, and the divines who have espoused Dr. Crisp’s errors, are some of the last persons in the world, by whom we may, with decency, be charged to hold “licentious” doctrines. And we are truly sorry, that any protestants should make it their business to corrupt that part of the gospel, which, if we believe Mr. Hill, the pope himself has modestly spared.

3. Mr. Hill might, with much more propriety, have objected, that our distinction is derived from the Jewish church; for “the old rogue,” as some solifidians have rashly called Moses, evidently makes a distinction between sins and infirmities. He punished a daring sabbath-breaker and an audacious rebel with death, with present death, with the most terrible kind of death. The language of his burning zeal seemed to be that of David: “Be not merciful to them that offend of malicious wickedness.” Psalm lix. 5. But upon such as accidentally contracted some involuntary pollution, he inflicted no other punishment, than that of a separation from the congregation till evening. If Mr. Hill considers the difference of these two punishments, he must either give place to perverseness, or confess, that wilful sins and involuntary infirmities were not Calvinistically confounded by the mediator of the old covenant; and that Moses himself made a rational and evangelical distinction between “the spot of God’s children,” and “the spot of” the “perverse and crooked generation.” Deut. xxxii. 5.

4. That Christ, the equitable and gracious Mediator of the new covenant, was not less merciful than stern Moses, with respect to the distinction we contend for, appears to us evident from his making a wide difference between the almost involuntary drowsiness of the eleven disciples in Gethsemane, and the malicious watchfulness of the traitor Judas. Concerning the offence of the former, he said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak ;" and with respect to the crime of the latter, he declared, "It would be good for that man, if he had never been born."

5. David and Paul exactly followed here in the doctrine of Moses and Christ. The psalmist says, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ; let them not have the dominion over me ; then shall I be upright," (or rather, as the word literally means in the original, "I shall be perfect,") "and innocent from the great transgression." Psalm xix. 13. Hence it is evident that some transgressions are incompatible with the perfection which David prayed for ; and that some errors, or some secret, unnoticed, involuntary faults are not.

6. This, we apprehend, is evident from his own words : "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no sin ; and in whose spirit there is no guile," though there may be some improprieties in his words and actions. Psalm xxxii. 2. David's meaning may be illustrated by the well-known case of Nathanael. Philip said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses wrote in the law ;" (a clear proof this, by the bye, that "the law" frequently means the Jewish gospel, which testifies of Christ to come ;) it is "Jesus of Nazareth. And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?" Here was an involuntary fault, an improper quoting of a proverbial expression ; and nevertheless, as he quoted it with a good intention, and to make way for a commendable inquiry into the report which he heard, his error was consistent with perfection ; he continued innocent from the "great" wilful "transgression." This I prove : 1. By his conduct : "Philip saith unto him, Come and see ;" and he instantly went, without betraying the least degree of the self-conceited stiffness, surly pride, and morose resist-

ance, which always accompany the unloving prejudice by which the law of Christ is broken. And, 2. By our Lord's testimony : "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile;" that is, no mixture of indwelling sin. Our Lord's word for "guile," in the original, is *δολος*, the very word which, being also connected with a negative, forms the epithet *αδολος*, whereby St. Peter denotes the unadulterated purity of God's word, which he compares to "sincere" or perfectly-pure "milk." 1 Pet. ii. 2. Hence I conclude, that, Christ himself being witness, evangelically speaking, there was no more indwelling sin in Nathanael, than there is in the pure word of God; and that this is the happy case of all those who fully deserve the glorious title of "Israelite indeed," which our Lord publicly bestowed upon Nathanael. To return :—

7. If to make a distinction between sins and infirmities, constitutes a man half a papist, it is evident that St. Paul was not less tinctured with popery, so called, than David, Moses, and Jesus Christ; for he writes to Timothy, "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear." 1 Tim. v. 20. And yet he writes to the Romans, "We that are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak." Rom. xv. 1. Here are two plain commands; the first, not to bear with sins; and the second, to bear with infirmities: a demonstration this, that there is an essential difference between sins and infirmities, and that this difference is discoverable to others, and much more to ourselves. Nay, in most cases, it is so discernible to those who have their spiritual senses properly disposed, that they can as easily distinguish between "sins," properly so called, and infirmities, as a wise judge can distinguish between accidental death, and wilful murder; or between unknowingly passing a false guinea with a kind intention to relieve the poor, and treasonably coining it with a roguish design to defraud the public. The difference between the sun and the moon is not more striking in the natural world, than the difference between sins and infirmities is in the moral world. Nevertheless, blind prejudice will probably confound them still, to darken

counsel, and to raise a cloud of logical dust, that anti-nomianism, the Diana of the imperfectionists, may make her escape, and save indwelling sin, which is the claw of the hellish lion, the tooth of the old dragon, the fishinghook of satan, and the deadly sting of the king of terrors.

8. Judicious Calvinists have seen the propriety of the distinction for which we are represented as unsound protestants. Of many whom I could mention, I shall only quote one, who, for his piety, wisdom, and moderation, is an honour to Calvinism ; I mean the Rev. Mr. Newton, minister of Olney. In his Letters on religious Subjects, page 199, he makes this ingenuous confession : "The experience of past years has taught me" (and I hope, that some day or other, it will also teach our other opponents) "to distinguish between ignorance and disobedience. The Lord is gracious to the weakness of his people : many involuntary mistakes will not interrupt their communion with him ; he pities their infirmity, and teaches them to do better. But if they dispute his known will, and act against the dictates of conscience, they will surely suffer for it. Wilful sin sadly perplexes and retards our progress." Here is, if I mistake not, a clear distinction made by a true protestant between disobedience or wilful sin, and weakness, involuntary mistakes, or infirmity.

9. If Mr. Hill will not regard Mr. Newton's authority, I beg he would show some respect for the authority of our church, and the import of his own prayers. If there is absolutely no difference between wilful sins, involuntary negligences, and unavoidable ignorances, why does our church distinguish between them when she directs us to pray, in the litany, "that it may please God to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances?" If these three words have but one meaning, should not Mr. Hill leave out the two last as ridiculous tautology? Or, at least, to remove from our church the suspicion of popery, should he not pray every Sunday that God would "forgive us all our sins, sins, and sins?"

From the nine preceding remarks and quotations it appears, if I mistake not, that our important distinction

between wilful sin and infirmities, or involuntary offences, recommends itself to reason and conscience; that it is supported by the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, by the psalms of David and the epistles of St. Paul, by the writings of judicious Calvinists and the liturgy of our church; and therefore it is as absurd to call it a "popish distinction," because the papists are not injudicious enough to reject it, as it is absurd to call the doctrine of Christ's divinity a "doctrine of devils," because devils acknowledged him to be the Son of God, and their omnipotent controller.

Should Mr. Hill reply, that, if this distinction cannot properly be called "popish," it deserves to be called "antinomian" and "licentious," because it countenances all the men who give to their grossest sins the soft name of "innocent infirmities;" we answer, 1. It has been proved, that Moses and Jesus Christ held this distinction; and therefore, to call it "antinomian" and "licentious," is to call not only Christ the holy One of God, but even "legal" Moses, an "antinomian," and "an advocate for licentiousness." See what these Calvinian refinements come to! 2. The men who abuse the doctrine of the distinction between sins and infirmities, abuse as much the doctrine of God's mercy, and the important distinction between working days and the Lord's day; but is this a proof that the doctrines of God's mercy, and of the distinction between the Lord's day and other days, are "licentious tenets, against which all that wish well to the interest of protestantism should protest in a body?"

If Mr. Hill tries to embarrass us by saying, "Where will you draw the line between wilful sins and (evangelically speaking) innocent infirmities?" we reply, without the least degree of embarrassment, Where Moses and the prophets have drawn it in the old testament; where Christ and the apostles have done it in the new; and where we do it after them in these pages. And, retorting the question, to show its frivolousness, we ask, Where will Mr. Hill draw the line between the free, evangelical observing of the Lord's day, and the superstitious, pharisaic keeping of the sabbath; or between weak, saving

faith, and wilful unbelief? Nay, upon his principles, where will he draw it even between a good and a bad work, if all our good works are really dung, dross, and filthy rags?

However, as the question is important, I shall give it a more particular answer. An infirmity is a breach of Adam's law of paradisiacal perfection, which our covenant God does not require of us now: and, evangelically speaking, a sin for Christians is a breach of Christ's evangelical law of Christian perfection; a perfection this, which God requires of all Christian believers. An infirmity, considering it with the error which it occasions, is consistent with pure love to God and man; but a sin is inconsistent with that love: an infirmity is free from guile, and has its root in our animal frame; but a sin is attended with guile, and has its root in our moral frame, springing either from the habitual corruption of our heart, or from the momentary perversion of our tempers: an infirmity unavoidably results from our unhappy circumstances, and from the necessary infelicities of our present state; but a sin flows from the avoidable and perverse choice of our own will: an infirmity has its foundation in an involuntary want of light and power; and a sin, in a wilful abuse of the present light and power we have. The one arises from involuntary ignorance and weakness, and is always attended with a good meaning, a meaning unmingled with any bad design or wicked prejudice; but the other has its source in voluntary perverseness and presumption, and is always attended with a meaning altogether bad; or, at best, with a good meaning founded on wicked prejudices. If to this line the candid reader adds the line which we have drawn, (section vi.,) between the perfection of a gentile, that of a Jew, and that of a Christian, he will not easily mistake in passing a judgment between the wilful sins which are inconsistent with an evangelically-sinless perfection, and the innocent infirmities which are consistent with such a perfection.

Confounding what God has divided, and dividing what the God of truth has joined, are the two capital strata-

gens of the God of error. The first he has chiefly used to eclipse or darken the doctrine of Christian perfection. By means of his instruments he has perpetually confounded the Christless law of perfect innocence given to Adam before the fall; and the mediatorial, evangelical law of penitential faith, under which our first parents were put, when God promised them the seed of the woman, the mild Lawgiver, the Prince of peace, the gentle King of the Jews, who "breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax," but compassionately tempers the doctrines of justice by the doctrines of grace, and, instead of the law of innocence, which he has kept and made honourable for us, has substituted his own evangelical law of repentance, faith, and gospel-obedience, which law is actually kept, according to one or another of its various editions, by all "just men made perfect;" that is, by all the wise virgins who are ready for the midnight cry, and the marriage of the Lamb.

Hence it appears that Pelagius and Augustine were both right in some things, and wrong in a capital point. Pelagius, the father of the rigid perfectionists and rigid free-willers, asserted that Christ's law could be kept, and that the keeping of that law was all the perfection which that law requires. So far Pelagius was right, having reason, conscience, and scripture on his side. But he was grossly mistaken if he confounded Christ's mediatorial law with the law of paradisiacal perfection. This was his capital error, which led him to deny original sin, and to extol human powers so excessively as to intimate, that, by a faithful and diligent use of them, man may be as innocent and as perfect as Adam was before the fall.

On the other hand, Augustine, the father of the rigid imperfectionists and rigid bound-willers, maintained that, our natural powers being greatly weakened and depraved by the fall, we cannot, by all the helps which the gospel affords, keep the law of innocence; that is, always think, speak, and act with that exactness and propriety which became immortal man, when God pronounced him "very good," in paradise. He asserted, that every impropriety

of thought, language, or behaviour is a breach of the law of perfection, under which God placed innocent man in the garden of Eden. And he proved, that every breach of this law is a sin against it, because the transgression of a law is sin; and that, of consequence, there can be no Adamic paradisiacal perfection in this life. So far Augustine was very right; so far reason and scripture support his doctrine; and so far the church is obliged to him for having made a stand against Pelagius. But he was very much mistaken, when he abolished the essential difference which there is between our Creator's law of strict justice, and our Redeemer's mediatorial law of justice, tempered with grace and mercy. Hence he concluded, that there is absolutely no keeping the law, and, consequently, no performing any perfect obedience in this life, and that we must sin as long as we continue in the body. Thus, while Pelagius made adult Christians as perfectly sinless as Adam was in paradise, Augustine made them so completely sinful, as to make it necessary for every one of them to go into a death-purgatory, crying, "There is a law in my members, which brings me into captivity to the law of sin. Sin dwelleth in me. With my flesh I serve the law of sin. I am carnal, sold under sin. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

The scripture doctrine which we vindicate stands at an equal distance from these extremes of Pelagius and Augustine. It rejects, with Augustine, the Adamic perfection which Pelagius absurdly pleaded for; and it explodes, with Pelagius, the necessary continuance of indwelling sin and carnal bondage, which Augustine no less absurdly maintained. Thus, adult believers are still sinners, still imperfect, according to the righteous law of paradisiacal innocence and perfection; and yet they are really saints, and perfect, according to the gracious law of evangelical justification and perfection: a law this which considers as upright and perfect, all the godly heathens, Jews, and Christians, who are without guile in their respective folds, or under their various dispensations. Thus, by still vindicating the various editions of Christ's

mediatorial law, which has been, at times, almost buried under heaps of pharisaic and antinomian mistakes, we still defend practical religion. And, as in the Scripture Scales, by proving the evangelical marriage of free grace and free will, we have reconciled Zelotes and Honestus, with respect to faith and works ; so, in this essay, by proving the evangelical union of the doctrines of grace and justice, in the mild and righteous law of our Redeemer, we reconcile Augustine and Pelagius, and force them to give up reason and scripture, or to renounce the monstrous errors which keep them asunder ; I mean the deep antinomian errors of Augustine, with respect to indwelling sin and a death-purgatory, and the highflown, pharisaic errors of Pelagius, with regard to Adamic perfection, and a complete freedom from original degeneracy.

The method we have used to bring about this reconciliation is quite plain and uniform. We have kept our Scripture Scales even, and used every weight of the sanctuary without prejudice ; especially those weights which the moralists throw aside as Calvinistic and antinomian ; and those which the solifidians cast away as Mosaic and legal. Thus, by evenly balancing the two gospel axioms, we have reunited the doctrines of grace and of justice, which heated Augustine and heated Pelagius have separated ; and we have distinguished our Redeemer's evangelical law from our Creator's paradisiacal law ; two distinct laws these, which those illustrious antagonists have confounded : and we flatter ourselves that, by this artless means, another step is taken towards bringing the two partial gospels of the day to the old standards of the one complete gospel of Jesus Christ.

I have done unfolding our reconciling plan ; but the disciples of Augustine, rallied by Calvin, have not done attacking it. I hope that I have answered the objections of Mr. Hill, Mr. Toplady, and Mr. Martin, against the evangelical perfection which we defend. But another noted divine of their persuasion comes up to their assistance : it is the Rev. Mr. Matthew Henry, who has deservedly got a great name among the Calvinists, by his valuable Exposition of the Bible, in five folio volumes.

This huge piece of ordnance carries a heavy ball, which threatens the very heart of our sinless gospel. It is too late to attempt an abrupt and silent flight: let then Mr. Henry fire away. If our doctrine of an evangelically-sinless perfection is founded upon a rock, it will stand; the ponderous ball, which seems likely to demolish it, will rebound against the doctrine of indwelling sin; and the standard of Christian liberty, which we wave, will be more respected than ever.

“Corruption,” saith that illustrious opponent, “is left remaining in the heart of good Christians, that they may learn war, may keep on the whole armour of God, and stand continually upon their guard.” “Thus corruption is driven out of the heart of believers by little and little. The work of sanctification is carried on gradually; but that judgment will, at length, be brought forth into a complete victory,” namely, when death shall come to the assistance of the atoning blood, and of the Spirit’s power. That this is Mr. Henry’s doctrine is evident from his comment on Gal. v. 17: “In a renewed man, where there is something of a good principle, there is a struggle between,” &c., “the remainders of sin, and the beginnings of grace; and this Christians must expect will be their exercise as long as they continue in this world;” or, to speak more intelligibly, till they go into the death-purgatory.

Not to mention here again Gal. v. 17, &c., Mr. Henry builds this uncomfortable doctrine upon the following text: “The Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little; thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.” Deut. vii. 22. And he gives us to understand, that “pride, and security, and other sins,” are “the enemies more dangerous than the beasts of the field, that would be apt to increase” upon us, if God delivered us from indwelling sin, that is, from the remains of pride, and carnal security, and other sins. This is backed by an appeal to the following text: “Now these are the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them, to know whether they” (the Israelites) “would hearken to the commandments of the Lord.”

Judges iii. 1, 4. See Mr. Henry's Exposition on these passages.

To this we answer: 1. That it is absurd to build the mighty doctrine of a death-purgatory upon an historical allusion. If such allusions were proofs, we could easily multiply our arguments; we could say, that sin is to be utterly destroyed, because Moses says, "The Lord delivered into our hands Og, and all his people, and we smote him until none was left to him remaining;" Deut. iii. 3; because "Joshua smote Horam, king of Gezer, and his people, until he had left him none remaining;" Deut. x. 33; because Saul was commanded "utterly to destroy the sinners,—the Amalekites," and lost his crown for sparing their king; because, when God "overthrew Pharaoh and all his host, there remained not so much as one of them;" Exod. xiv. 28; because, when God "rained fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, he overthrew all their" wicked "inhabitants;" and because Moses says, "I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust, and cast the dust thereof into the brook." Deut. ix. 21. But we should blush to build the doctrine of Christian perfection upon so absurd and slender a foundation; and yet such a foundation would be far more solid than that on which Mr. Henry builds the doctrine of Christian imperfection, and of the necessary indwelling of sin in the most holy believers. For,

2. Before God permitted the Canaanites to remain in the land, he had said, "When ye are passed over Jordan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you, and destroy all their pictures; for I have given you the land to possess it. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you, then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. And, moreover, I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them." Numbers xxxiii. 51, &c. Hence it appears, that the sparing of the Canaanites was a punishment inflicted upon the Israelites, as well as a favour shown to

the Canaanites, some of whom, like Rahab and the Gibeonites, probably turned to the Lord, and, as God's creatures, enjoyed his saving mercy in the land of promise. But is indwelling sin one of God's creatures, that God should show it any favour, and should refuse his assistance to the faithful believers who are determined to give it no quarter? Can indwelling sin be converted to God, as the indwelling Canaanites might, and as some of them undoubtedly were?

3. But the capital flaws of Mr. Henry's argument are, I apprehend, two suppositions, the absurdity of which is glaring: "Corruption," says he, "is left remaining in the heart of good Christians, that they may learn war, may keep on the whole armour of God, and stand continually upon their guard." Just as if Christ had not learned war, kept on the breastplate of righteousness, and stood continually upon his guard, without the help of indwelling sin! Just as if the world, the devil, the weakness of the flesh, and death, our last enemy, with which our Lord so severely conflicted, were not adversaries powerful enough to prove us, to engage us to learn war, and to make us keep on and use "the whole armour of God" to the end of our life! The other absurd supposition is that "pride, and security, and other sins," (which are supposed to be typified by "the wild beasts" mentioned in Deut. vii. 22,) "will increase upon us" by the destruction of "indwelling sin." But is it not as ridiculous to suppose this, as to say, "Pride shall increase upon us by the destruction of pride; and carnal security will gather strength by the extirpation of carnal security, and by, the implanting of constant watchfulness, which is a branch of the Christian perfection which we contend for?"

4. With respect to the inference which Mr. Henry draws from these words, "Thou mayest not consume them at once; the Lord will put them out before thee by little and little;" is it not highly absurd also? Does he give us the shadow of an argument to prove, that this verse was spoken of our indwelling corruptions? And suppose it was, would this prove that the doctrine of a

death-purgatory is true? You say to a greedy person, "You must eat your dinner by little and little, you cannot swallow it down at one gulp:" a farmer teaches his son to plough, and says, "We cannot plough this field at once, but we may plough it by little and little; that is, by making one furrow after another, till we end the last furrow." Hence I draw the following inferences: we eat our meals and plough our fields by little and little; and therefore no dinner can be eaten, and no field ploughed, before death. A surgeon says, that "the healing of a wound is carried on gradually;" hence his prejudiced mate runs away with the notion, that no wound can be healed so long as a patient is alive. Who does not see the flaw of these conclusions?

5. But the greatest absurdity, I apprehend, is yet behind. Not to observe, that we do not remember to have read any command in our bibles not to consume sin at once; or any declaration, that God will put it out only "by little and little;" we ask, What length of time do you suppose God means? You make him say, that he will make an end of our indwelling sin "by little and little:" do you think he means four days, four years, or fourscore years? If you say, that God cannot or will not wholly cleanse the thoughts of our hearts under fourscore years, you send all who die under that age into hell, or into some purgatory where they must wait till the eighty years of their conflict with indwelling sin are ended. If you say, that God can or will do it in four days, but not under, you absurdly suppose, that the penitent thief remained at least three days in paradise full of indwelling sin; seeing his sanctification was to be "carried on gradually" in the space of four days at least. If you are obliged to grant, that when the words "by little and little" are applied to the destruction of indwelling sin, they may mean four hours, (the time which the penitent thief probably lived after his conversion,) as well as four days, do not you begin to be ashamed of your system? And if you reply, that death alone fully extirpates indwelling sin, does not this favourite tenet of yours overturn Mr. Henry's doctrine about the necessity of the slow,

gradual destruction of indwelling sin? May not a sinner believe in a moment, when God helps him to believe? And may not a believer, whom you suppose necessarily full of indwelling sin as long as he is in this world, die in a moment? If you answer in the negative, you deny the sudden death of John the baptist, St. James, and St. Paul, who had their heads cut off in a moment: in a word, you deny that any believer can die suddenly. If you reply in the affirmative, you give up the point, and grant that indwelling sin may be instantaneously destroyed. And now what becomes of Mr. Henry's argument, which supposes that sanctification can never be complete without a "long, gradual process;" and that the extirpation of sin cannot take place but "by little and little?"

I have set before thee, reader, the lights and shades of our doctrine; I have produced our arguments, and those of our opponents; and now, say which of them bear the stamp of imperfection. If thou pronounce that Urim and Thummin, "light" and "perfection," belong to the arguments of Mr. Hill, Mr. Toplady, Mr. Martin, and Mr. Henry, I must lay by my pen, and deplore the infelicity of our having a reason, which unsays in my breast what it says in thine. But if thou find, after mature deliberation, that our arguments are "light in the Lord," as being more agreeable to the dictates of unprejudiced reason than those of our antagonists, more conformable to the plain declarations of the sacred writers, fitter to encourage believers in the way of holiness, more suitable to the nature of undefiled religion, and better adapted to the display of the Redeemer's glory; I shall enjoy the double pleasure of embracing the truth, and of embracing her together with thee. In the mean time, closing here the argumentative part of this essay, I just beg the continuance of thy favourable attention, while I practically address perfect pharisees, prejudiced imperfectionists, imperfect believers, and perfect Christians.

SECTION XVII.

I ADDRESS you first, ye perfect Christian pharisees, because ye are most ready to profess Christian perfection, though, alas! ye stand at the greatest distance from perfect humility,—the grace which is most essential to the perfect Christian's character; and because the enemies of our doctrine make use of you first, when they endeavour to root it up from the earth.

That ye may know whom I mean by "perfect Christian pharisees," give me leave to show you your own picture in the glass of a plain description. Ye have professedly entered into the fold where Christ's sheep, which are perfected in love, rest all at each other's feet, and at the feet of the Lamb of God. But how have ye entered? by Christ the door? or at the door of presumption? Not by Christ the door; for Christ is meekness and lowliness manifested in the flesh, but ye are still ungentle and fond of praise. When he pours out his soul as a divine prophet, he says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." But ye overlook this humble door; your proud, gigantic minds are above stooping low enough to follow Him who "made himself of no reputation," that he might raise us to heavenly honours; and who, to pour just contempt upon human pride, had his first night's lodging in a stable, and spent his last night partly on the cold ground, in a storm of divine wrath, and partly in an ignominious confinement, exposed to the greatest indignities which Jews and gentiles could pour upon him. He rested his infant head upon hay, his dying head upon thorns. A manger was his cradle, and a cross his death-bed. Thirty years he travelled from the sordid stable to the accursed tree, unnoticed by his own peculiar people. In the brightest of his days, poor fishermen, some Galilean women, and a company of shouting children, formed all his retinue. Shepherds were his first attendants, and malefactors his last companions.

His first beatitude was, "Blessed are the poor in

spirit;" and the last, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." His first doctrine was, "Repent;" nor was the last unlike to it: "If I have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. He that will be first among you, let him be the last of all." Now, far from practising with godly sincerity this last lesson of our humble Lord, ye do not so much as truly relish the first; ye do not delight in, nay, ye abhor, penitential poverty of spirit. Your humility is not cordial, and wrought into your nature by grace; but complimentary, and woven into your carriage by art. Ye are humble in looks, in gestures, in voice, in dress, in behaviour, so far as external humility helps you to secure the reputation of perfect Christians, at which ye aspire from a motive of pharisaic ambition; but ye continue strangers to the childlike simplicity and unaffected brokenness of Christ's perfect disciples. Ye are the very reverse of the "Israelites in whom there is no guile;" ye resemble the artful Gibeonites, who, for a time, imposed upon Joshua's artless simplicity; your feigned profession of special grace deceives those of God's children who have more of the simplicity of the dove, than of the serpent's wisdom. Ye choose the lowest place, but ye do not love it; if ye cheerfully take it, it is not among your equals, but among your inferiors, because you think, that such a condescending step may raise the credit of your humility, without endangering your superiority. If ye stoop, and go down, it is not because ye see yourselves unworthy of the seat of honour; but because ye hope, that people will, by and by, say to you, "Come up higher." Your pharisaic cunning aims at wearing at once the coronet of genuine humility and the crown of self-exalting pride. Ye love to be esteemed of men for your goodness and devotion. Ye want to be admired for your exactness, zeal, and gracious attainments. The pride of the Jewish pharisees was coarse in comparison of yours; they wore the rough garment, and you wear the silks, of spiritual vanity: and even when ye dye them in the blood of the

Lamb, which you extol in word, it is to draw the confidence of humble Christians by your Christian appearance and language, more than to follow the propensity of a new nature, which loves to be clothed with humility, and feels itself in its own centre when it rests in deep poverty of spirit, and sees that God is all in all.

One of the greatest ends of Christ's coming into the world was to empty us of ourselves, and to fill us with humble love; but ye are still full of yourselves, and void of Christ, that is, void of humility incarnate. Ye still aim at some wrong mark, whether it be self-glory, self-interest, self-pleasure, self-party, or self-applause; in a word, one selfish scheme or another, contrary to the pure love of God and of your neighbour, secretly destroys the root of your profession, and may be compared to the unseen worm that ate the root of Jonah's gourd. Ye have a narrow, contracted spirit; ye do not gladly sacrifice your private satisfaction, your interest, your reputation, your prejudices, to the general interest of truth and love, and to the public good of the whole body of Christ. Ye are yet in secret bondage to men, places, and things. Ye do not heartily entertain the wisdom from above, which is "pure, gentle, easy to be entreated, and full of mercy." Nay, ye are above conviction; gross sinners yield to truth before you. Like Jehu, ye are zealous, and ye pretend that it is for the Lord of hosts; but, alas! it is for your opinions, your party, your honour. In a word, ye do not walk in constant, solemn expectation of death and judgment; your will is not broken; your carnal confidence is yet alive; the heavenly Dove does not sit in your breast; self, wrapt up in the cloak of humility, is still set up in your heart, and in secret you serve that cursed idol more than God. Satan, transformed into an angel of light, has artfully led you to the profession of Christian perfection, through a circle of external performances, through glorious forms of doctrine in the letter, and through a fair show of zeal for complete holiness: the Lord, to punish your formality, has, in part, given you up to your delusion; and now ye as much believe yourselves perfect Christians, as the

pharisees, in our Lord's days, believed themselves perfect Jews.

Mr. Wesley, in his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, has borne his faithful testimony against such weaknesses of perfect love as ye are. If ye despise this address, regard his remarks: "Others," says he, "who think they have the direct witness of their being renewed in love, are, nevertheless, manifestly wanting in the fruit: some are undoubtedly wanting in longsuffering,—Christian resignation. They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs, and cheerfully embrace it. They do not 'in every thing give thanks,' and 'rejoice evermore.' They are not happy, at least, not always happy; for sometimes they complain; they say, 'This is hard.' Some are wanting in gentleness; they resist evil, instead of turning the other cheek. They do not receive reproach with gentleness; no, nor even reproof. Nay, they are not able to bear contradiction without the appearance, at least, of resentment: if they are reproved or contradicted, though mildly, they do not take it well; they behave with more distance and reserve than they did before," &c. "Some are wanting in goodness; they are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft, and loving, at all times, in their spirit, in their words, in their look, in their air, in the whole tenor of their behaviour; and that to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of persons; particularly to them that are out of the way, to opposers, and to those of their own household: they do not long, study, endeavour by every means to make all about them happy. Some are wanting in fidelity,—a nice regard to truth, simplicity, and godly sincerity. Their love is hardly without dissimulation; something like guile is found in their mouth. To avoid roughness, they lean to the other extreme; they are smooth to an excess, so as scarce to avoid a degree of fawning. Some are wanting in meekness,—quietness of spirit, composure, evenness of temper; they are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low; their mind is not well balanced. Their affections are either not in due proportion: they have too much of the one, too little of the other; or they are not duly mixed and tempered

together, so as to counterpoise each other. Hence there is often a jar ; their soul is out of tune, and cannot make the true harmony. Some are wanting in temperance ; they do not steadily use that kind and degree of food which they know, or might know, would most conduce to the health, strength, and vigour of the body. Or they are not temperate in sleep ; they do not rigorously adhere to what is best for body and mind ; they use neither fasting nor abstinence," &c.

I have described your delusion ; but who can describe its fatal consequences ? Who can tell the mischief it has done, and continues to do ? The few sincere perfectionists, and the multitude of captious imperfectionists, have equally found you out. The former are grieved for you ; and the latter triumph through you.

When the sincere perfectionists consider the inconsistency of your profession, they are ready to give up their faith in Christ's all-cleansing blood, and their hope of getting a clean heart in this life. They are tempted to follow the multitude of professors, who sit themselves down in self-imputed righteousness, or in solifidian notions of an ideal perfection in Christ. And it is well if some of them have not already yielded to the temptation, and begun to fight against the hopes, which they once entertained, of loving God with all their heart. It is well if some, through you, have not been led to say, "I once sweetly enjoyed the thought of doing the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. Once I hopefully prayed, God would so cleanse my heart, that I might perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name, in this world. But now I have renounced my hopes ; and I equally abhor the doctrine of evangelical perfection, and that of evangelical worthiness. I have made a firm agreement with sin. It shall dwell in my heart so long as my soul shall dwell in my body. Neither the word nor the Spirit of Christ shall eject it. When I was a young convert, I believed that Christ could really make an end of all moral pollution, cast out the man of sin, and cleanse us from heart-sin, as well as from outward iniquity, in this life ; but I soon met with unhumbled, self-willed people, who

boldly stood up for this glorious liberty, and made me question the truth of the doctrine. Nay, in process of time, I found that some of those who most confidently professed to have attained this salvation were farther from the gentleness, simplicity, catholic spirit, and unfeigned humility of Christ, than many believers who had never considered the doctrine of Christian perfection. These offences striking in with some disappointments which I myself met with, in feebly seeking the pearl of perfect love, made me conclude that it can no more be found than the philosopher's stone, and that they are all either fools or knaves who set believers upon seeking it. And now I everywhere decry the doctrine of perfection as a dangerous delusion. I set people against it wherever I go; and my zeal in this respect has been attended with the greatest success. I have damped the hopes of many perfectionists, and I have proselyted several to the doctrine of Christian imperfection. With them I now quietly wait to be purified from indwelling sin in the article of death, and to be made perfect in another world, not only in duty to my parents, in loyalty to the king, in charity to the poor, and love to my wife; but also in patience towards those who cross my will, and in love to all my enemies."

This absurd speech is, I fear, the language of many hearts, although it does not openly drop from many lips. Thus are you, O ye perfect pharisees, the great instruments, by which the tempter tears away the shield of those unsettled Israelites, who look more at your inconsistencies, than they do at the beauty of holiness, the promise of God, the blood of Christ, and the power of the Spirit.

But this is not all: as ye destroy the budding faith of sincere perfectionists, so ye strengthen the unbelief of the solidians. Through you their prejudices are grown up into a fixed detestation of Christian perfection. Ye have hardened them in their error, and furnished them with plausible arguments to destroy the truth which ye contend for. Did ye never hear their triumphs? "Ha! ha! So would we have it! These are some of the people who stand up for sinless perfection! they are all alike. Did not I

tell you, that you would find them out to be no better than temporary monsters? What monstrous pride! What touchiness, obstinacy, bigotry, and stoicism characterizes them! How do they strain at gnats and swallow camels! I had rather be an open drunkard than a perfectionist. Publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before them." These are the cutting speeches to which your glaring inconsistency, and the severe prejudices of our opponents, give birth. Is it not deplorable that your tempers should thus drive men to abhor the doctrine which your lips recommend?

And what do ye get by thus dispiriting the real friends of Christian perfection, and by furnishing its sworn enemies with such sharp weapons against it? Think ye that the mischief ye do shall not recoil upon yourselves? Is not Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? If he detested the perfect pharisaism of unhumbled Jews, will he admire the perfect self-righteousness of aspiring Christians? If he formerly "resisted the proud, and gave grace to the humble," what reason have ye to hope that he will submit to your spiritual pride, and reward your religious ostentation with a crown of glory? Ye perhaps cry out against antinomianism, and I commend you for it; but are ye not deeply tainted with the worst sort of antinomianism, that which starches, stiffens, and swells the soul? Ye justly bear your testimony against those who render the law of Christ of none effect to believers, by degrading it into a rule, which they strip of the punitive and remunerative sanctions with which it stands armed in the sacred records. But are ye not doubly guilty, who maintain that this law is still in force as a law, and nevertheless refuse to pay it sincere, internal obedience? For when ye break the first commandment of Christ's evangelical law, by practically discarding penitential "poverty of spirit;" and when ye transgress the "last," by abhorring the "lowest place," by disdaining to "wash each other's feet," and by refusing to "prefer others in honour before yourselves;" are ye not guilty of breaking all the law, by breaking it in one point, in the capital point of humble love, which runs through all the

parts of the law, as vital blood does through all the parts of the body? O how much more dangerous is the case of an unhumbled man, who stiffly walks in robes of self-made perfection, than that of an humble man, who, through prejudice and the force of example, meekly walks in robes of self-imputed righteousness!

Behold, thou callest thyself a perfect Christian, and retest in the evangelical law of Christ, which is commonly called "the gospel!" Thou makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, even the way of Christian perfection, being instructed out of the gospel; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of babes, or imperfect believers; having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the gospel. Thou, therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest another should not break the law of Christ, through breaking it dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed through you, among those who seek an occasion to blaspheme it. See Rom. ii. 17, &c. And think ye that ye shall escape the righteous judgment of God? Has Christ no woes but for Jewish pharisees? O, be no longer mistaken! Before ye are punished by being here given up to a reprobate mind, and by being hereafter cast into the hell of hypocrites, the outer darkness where there will be more weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth than in any other hell; before ye are overtaken by the awful hour of death, and the dreadful day of judgment, practically learn, that Christian perfection is the mind which was in Christ; especially his humble, meek, quiet mind; his gentle, free, loving spirit. Aim at it by sinking into deep self-abhorrence, and not by using, as ye have hitherto done, the empty talk and profession of Christian perfection, as a step to reach the top of spiritual pride.

Mistake me not: I do not blame you for holding the doctrine of Christian perfection, but for wilfully missing the only way which leads to it; I mean, the humble, meek, and loving Jesus, who says, "I am the way, and

the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved into so great salvation. He that entereth not by" this "door into" this "sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way," (and especially he that climbeth by the way of pharisaic formality,) "the same is a thief and a robber:" he robs Christ of his glory, and pretends to what he has no more right to, than a thief has to your property. Would ye then be right? Do not cast away the doctrine of an evangelically-sinless holiness, but contend more for it with your heart than with your lips. With all your soul press after such a perfection as Christ, St. Paul, and St. John taught and exemplified,—a perfection of meekness and humble love. Earnestly believe all the woes which the gospel denounces against self-righteous pharisees, and all the blessings which it promises to perfect penitents. Drink less into the letter, and more into the spirit. Thirst after the gentle and humble spirit of Christ, till, like a fountain of living water, it spring up to everlasting life in your heart. Ye have climbed to the pharisaic perfection of Saul of Tarsus, when, "touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless." Would ye now attain the evangelical perfection which he was possessed of, when he said, "Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded?" Only follow him through the regeneration; fall to the dust before God; rise conscious of the blindness of your heart, meekly deplore it with penitential shame; and, if you follow the directions laid down in the third address, I doubt not but, dangerous as your case is at present, you will be, like St. Paul, as eminent for Christian perfection as you have hitherto been for pharisaic holiness.

SECTION XVIII.

I FEAR that, next to the persons whom I have just addressed, ye injure the cause of holiness, O ye believers, who have been deluded into doctrinal antinomianism by the bad arguments which are answered in the preceding

pages ! Permit me, therefore, to address you next ; nor suffer prejudice to make you throw away this expostulation before you have granted it a fair perusal.

Ye directly or indirectly plead for the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in your own hearts, and in the hearts of all true Christians. But may I be so bold as to ask, Who gave you leave so to do ? And when were ye commissioned to propagate this unholy gospel ? Was it at your baptism, when ye were ranked among Christ's soldiers and received a Christian name, in token that ye would "keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of your life ;" and that you would "not be ashamed to fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil, unto your life's end ?" Are not these three enemies strong enough sufficiently to exercise your patience, and try your warlike skill to the last ? Did your sponsors promise for you that you would quarter a fourth enemy, called "indwelling sin," in your very breast, lest ye should not have enemies enough to fight against ? On the contrary, were ye not exhorted, "utterly to abolish the whole body of sin ?" If so, is it not strange that ye should spend part of your precious time in pleading, under various pretexts, for the preservation of heart-sin, a sin this, which gives life, warmth, and vigour, to the whole body of sin ? And is it not deplorable that, instead of conscientiously fulfilling your baptismal engagements, ye should attack those who desire to fulfil them by "utterly abolishing the whole body of sin ?"

But ye are, perhaps, ministers of the established church ; and, in this case, I ask, When did the bishop send you upon this strange warfare ? was it at your confirmation, in which he bound upon you your solemn obligations to "keep God's holy will and commandments," so as "utterly to abolish the whole body of sin ?" Is it probable that he commissioned you to pull down what he confirmed, and to demolish the perfection which he made you vow to attain, and to "walk in all the days of your life ?" If the bishop gave you no such commission at your confirmation, did he do it at your ordination, when he said, "Receive authority to preach the word of God ?" Is there no dif-

ference between "the word of God," which cuts up all sin, root and branch, and the word of Satan, which asserts the propriety of the continuance of heart-sin during the term of life? If not; did the bishop do it when he exhorted and charged you, "never to cease your labour, care, and diligence, till you have done all that lieth in you, to bring all such as are committed to your charge to that agreement of faith, and that perfectness of age in Christ, that there shall be no place left among you for error in religion, or viciousness in life;" that is, I apprehend, till the truth of the gospel, and the love of the Spirit, have perfectly purified the minds and renewed the hearts, of all your hearers?

How can ye, in all your confessions and sacramental offices, renounce sin, the accursed thing which God abhors, and which obedient believers detest; and yet plead for its life, its strength, its constant energy, so long as we are in this world? We could better bear with you, if ye appropriated an hand, or a foot, an eye, or an ear, to sin during term of life; but who can bear your pleas for the necessary continuance of sin in the heart? Is it not enough that this murderer of Christ and all mankind rambles about the walls of the city? Will ye still insinuate, that he must have the citadel to the last, and keep it garrisoned with filthy lusts, base affections, bad tempers, or "diabolonians," who, like prisoners, show themselves at the grate, and, "like snakes, toads, and wild beasts, are the fiercer for being confined?" Who has taught you thus to represent Christ as the keeper, and not the destroyer, of our corruptions? If believers are truly willing to get rid of sin, but cannot, because Christ has bolted their hearts with an adamant decree, which prevents sin from being turned out; if he has irrevocably given leave to indwelling sin to quarter for life in every Christian's heart, as the king of France in the last century gave leave to his dragoons to quarter for some months in the houses of the poor oppressed protestants; who does not see that Christ may be called the protector of indwelling sin, rather than its enemy?

Ye absurdly complain that the doctrine of Christian

perfection does not exalt our Saviour, because it represents him as radically saving his obedient people from their indwelling sin in this life. But are ye not guilty of the very error which ye charge upon us, when ye insinuate that he cannot or will not say to our inbred sins, "Those mine enemies which will not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me?" If a common judge has power to pass sentence of death upon all the robbers and murderers who are properly prosecuted; and if they are hanged and destroyed in a few days, weeks, or months, in consequence of his sentence; how strangely do ye reflect upon Christ, and revive the Agag within us, when ye insinuate, that he, the Judge of all, who was "manifested for this" very "purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil," so far forgets his errand, that he never destroys indwelling sin in one of his willing people, so long as they are in this world; although that sin is the capital and most mischievous "work of the devil!"

! Your doctrine of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in all faithful believers, traduces not only the Son of man, but also the adorable Trinity. The Father gives his only-begotten Son, his Isaac, to be crucified, that the ram "sin" may be offered up and slain; but you insinuate that the life of that cursed ram is secured by a decree, which allots it the heart of all believers for a safe retreat, and a warm stable, so long as we are in this world. You represent the Son as an almighty Saviour, who offers to "make us free" from sin; and yet appoints, that the galling yoke of indwelling sin shall remain tied to, and bound upon, our very hearts for life. Ye describe the Holy Ghost as a sanctifier, who applies Christ's all-cleansing blood to the believer's heart; filling it with the oil of holiness and gladness; and yet ye suppose, that our hearts must necessarily remain desperately wicked, and full of indwelling sin! Is it right to pour contempt upon Christianity, by charging such inconsistencies upon Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

It can hardly be expected, that those who thus misrepresent their God should do their neighbour justice. Hence

the liberty which ye take to fix a blot upon the most holy characters. What have the prophets and apostles done to you, that ye should represent them, not only as men who had "a heart partly evil to the last," but also as advocates for the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers till death? And why do ye so eagerly take your advantage of holy Paul in particular, and catch at a figurative mode of speech, to insinuate that he was a "carnal wretch, sold under sin," even when he expected "a crown of righteousness" at the hand of his "righteous Judge," for having "finished his course" with the "just man made perfect?" Nay, what have we done to you, that ye should endeavour to take from us the greatest comfort we have in fighting against the remains of sin? Why will ye deprive us of the pleasing and purifying hope of taking the Jericho which we encompass, and killing the Goliath whom we attack? And what has indwelling sin done for you, that ye should still plead for the propriety of its continuance in our hearts? Is it not the root of all outward sin, and the spring of all the streams of iniquity, which carry desolation through every part of the globe? If ye hate the fruit, why do ye so eagerly contend for the necessary continuance of the root? And if ye favour godliness, (for many of you undoubtedly do,) why do you put such a conclusive argument as this into the mouths of the wicked?—"These good men contend for the propriety of indwelling sin, that grace may abound. And why should we not plead for the propriety of outward sin for the same important reason? Does not God approve of an honest heart, which scorns to cloke inward iniquity with outward demureness?"

Mr. Hill has lately published an ingenious dialogue, called "A Lash at Enthusiasm," in which he uses an argument against pleading for lukewarmness, which, with very little variation, may be retorted against his pleading for indwelling sin. "Suffer me," says he, "to put the sentiments of such persons" as plead for the middle way of lukewarmness, "into the form of a prayer, which we may suppose would run in some such expressions as the following:—'O Lord, thy word requires that I should

love thee with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, that I should renounce the world," and indwelling sin, "'and should present myself as an holy, reasonable, and lively sacrifice unto thee; but Lord, these are such over-righteous extremes,'" and such heights of sinless perfection, "'as I cannot away with. Therefore grant that thy love, and a moderate share of the love of the world,'" or of indwelling sin, "'may both reign,'" or at least continue, "'in my heart at once. I ask it for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.'" Mr. Hill justly adds, "Now, dear madam, if you are shocked at such a petition, consider that it is the exact language of your own heart, whilst you can plead for what you call the 'middle way' of religion." Page 26. And I beg leave to take up his own argument, and to add with equal propriety, "Now, dear sirs, if you are shocked at such a petition, consider that it is the exact language of your own hearts, whilst ye can plead for what ye call 'indwelling sin,' or the remains of sin."

Nor can I see what ye get by such a conduct. The excruciating thorn of indwelling sin sticks in your hearts: we assert that Christ can and will extract it, if ye plead his promise of sanctifying you wholly, in soul, body, and spirit. But ye say, "This cannot be: the thorn must stay in till death extract it; and the leprosy shall cleave to the walls till the house is demolished." Just as if Christ, by radically cleansing the lepers in the days of his flesh, had not given repeated proofs of the absurdity of your argument! Just as if part of the gospel was not, "The lepers are cleansed," and, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed!"

If ye get nothing in pleading for Christian imperfection, permit me to tell you what you lose by it, and what ye might get by steadily going on to perfection.

1. If ye earnestly aimed at Christian perfection, ye would have a bright testimony in your own soul, that you are sincere, and that ye walk agreeably to your baptismal engagements. I have already observed, that some of the most pious Calvinists doubt, if those who do not pursue Christian perfection are Christians at all. Hence

it follows, that the more earnestly you pursue it, the stronger will be your confidence, that you are upright Christians. And when ye shall be perfected in love, ye shall have that evidence of your sincerity which will perfectly "cast out" servile "fear which hath torment," and nourish the filial fear which has safety and delight. It is hard to conceive how we can constantly enjoy the full assurance of faith out of the state of Christian perfection. For so long as a Christian inwardly breaks Christ's evangelical law, he is justly condemned in his own conscience. If his heart does not condemn him for it, it is merely because he is asleep in the lap of antinomianism. On the other hand, says St. John, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" that make for our condemnation. But if we "love in deed and in truth," which none but the perfect do at all times, "hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." 1 John iii. 18—20.

2. The perfect Christian, who has left all to follow Christ, is peculiarly near and dear to God. He is, if I may use the expression, one of God's favourites; and his prayers are remarkably answered. This will appear to you indubitable, if ye can receive the testimony of these who are perfected in obedient love. "Beloved," say they, "whatsoever we ask, we receive of him; because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight;" that is, because we are perfected in obedient love. 1 John iii. 21, 22. This peculiar blessing ye lose by despising Christian perfection. Nay, so great is the union which subsists between God and the perfect members of his Son, that it is compared to dwelling in God, and having God dwelling in us, in such a manner, that the Father, the Son, and the Comforter are said to "make their abode" with us. "At that day," when ye shall be perfected in one, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him; and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 20, 23. Again: "He that keepeth God's commandments dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iii. 24.

“Ye are my” dearest “friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you ;” that is, if ye attain the perfection of your dispensation. John xv. 14. Once more : “Keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” John xiv. 15, 16. From these scriptures it appears, that, under every dispensation, the perfect, or they who keep the commandments, have unspeakable advantages, from which the lovers of imperfection debar themselves.

3. Ye bring far less glory to God, in the state of indwelling sin, than ye would do if ye were perfected in love ; for perfect Christians (all things being equal) glorify God more than those who remain full of inbred iniquity. Hence it is, that, in the very chapter where our Lord so strongly presses Christian perfection upon his disciples, he says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matt. v. 16. For, “herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” John xv. 8. It is true, that the fruit of the perfect is not always relished by men who judge only according to appearances ; but God, who judges righteous judgment, finds it rich and precious ; and therefore the two mites which the poor widow gave with a cheerful and perfect heart were more precious in his account, and brought him more glory, than all the money which the imperfect worshippers cast into the treasury, though some of them “cast in much.” Hence also our Lord commanded, that the work of perfect love which Mary wrought, when she anointed his feet for his burial, “should be told for a memorial of her wherever this” (the Christian) “gospel should be preached in the whole world.” Such is the honour which the Lord puts upon the branches in him that bear fruit to perfection.

4. The perfect Christian, all things being equal, is a more useful member of society than the imperfect. Never will ye be such humble men, such good parents, such dutiful children, such loving brothers, such loyal subjects, such kind neighbours, such indulgent husbands, and such faithful friends, as when ye shall have obtained the perfect sincerity of obedience. Ye will then, in your degree,

have the simplicity of the gentle dove, the patience of the laborious ox, the courage of the magnanimous lion, and the wisdom of the wary serpent, without any of its poison. In your little sphere of action, ye will abound in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love, far more than ye did before ; for a field properly weeded, and cleared from briers, is naturally more fruitful than one which is shaded by spreading brambles, or filled with the indwelling roots of noxious weeds ; it being a capital mistake of the spiritual husbandmen, who till the Lord's field in mystical Geneva, to suppose, that the plant of humility thrives best when the roots of indwelling sins are twisted around its root.

5. None but "just men made perfect" are "meet to be made partakers of the inheritance among the saints in light ;" an inheritance this, which no man is fit for, till he has "purified himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." If modern divines, therefore, assure you, that a believer, full of indwelling sin, has a full title to heaven, believe them not ; for the Holy Ghost has said, that the believer who "breaks the law" of liberty "in one point, is guilty of all." and that "no defilement shall enter" into heaven. And our Lord himself has assured us, that "the pure in heart shall see God ;" and that they who "were ready" for that sight "went in with the bridegroom to the marriage-feast of the Lamb." And who is ready? Undoubtedly the believer whose lamp is trimmed and burning. But is a spiritual lamp trimmed, when its flame is darkened by the black fungus of indwelling sin? Again : who shall be saved into glory, but the man whose "heart is washed from iniquity?" But is that heart washed which continues full of indwelling corruption? Woe be, therefore, to the heathens, Jews, and Christians who trifle away the accepted time, and die out of a state of heathen, Jewish, or Christian perfection ! They have no chance of going to heaven, but through the purgatory preached by the heathens, the papists, and the Calvinists. And should the notions of these purgatories be groundless, it unavoidably follows, that unpurged or imperfect souls must, at death, rank with the unready souls, whom our

Lord calls "foolish virgins," and against whom the door of heaven will be shut. How awful is this consideration, my dear brethren! How should it make us stretch every nerve, till we have attained the perfection of our dispensation! I would not encourage tormenting fears in an unscriptural manner; but I should rejoice if all who call Jesus "Lord," would mind his solemn declarations: "I say unto you," my friends, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body," &c.; "but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear Him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, Fear him," who will burn, in the fire of wrath, those who harbour the indwelling man of sin, lest he should be utterly consumed by the fire of love.

Should ye cry out against this doctrine, and ask if all imperfect Christians are in a damnable state; we reply, that so long as a Christian believer sincerely presses after Christian perfection, he is safe, because he is in the way of duty; and were he to die at midnight, before midnight God would certainly bring him to Christian perfection, or bring Christian perfection to him; for we "are confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," because they "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling." But if a believer falls, loiters, and rests upon former experiences, depending upon a self-made, pharisaical perfection, or upon a self-imputed, antinomian perfection; our chief message to him is that of St. Paul: "Awake, thou that sleepest, awake to righteousness, and sin not, for thou hast not the" heart-purifying "knowledge of God, which is eternal life. Arise from the dead;" call for oil, "and Christ will give thee light." Otherwise, thou shalt share the dreadful fate of the lukewarm Laodiceans, and of the foolish virgins, whose "lamps went out," instead of "shining more and more to the perfect day."

6. This is not all. As ye will be fit for judgment, and a glorious heaven, when ye shall be perfected in love; so you will actually enjoy a gracious heaven in your own soul. You will possess within you the kingdom of God,

which consists in settled "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." But so long as ye neglect Christian perfection, and continue "sold under" indwelling "sin," ye not only risk the loss of the heaven of heavens, but ye lose a little heaven upon earth; for perfect Christians are so full of peace and love, that they "triumph in Christ with joy unspeakable and full of glory," and "rejoice in tribulation," with a "patience" which "has its perfect work." Yea, they "count it all joy when they fall into divers trials;" and such is their deadness to the world, that they "are exceeding glad, when men say all manner of evil of them falsely for Christ's sake." How desirable is such a state! And who, but the blessed above, can enjoy a happiness superior to that of him who can say?—"I am ready to be offered up. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but, O death, where is thy sting? Not in my heart, since the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Not in my mind, for to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." Now, this peculiar happiness ye lose, so long as ye continue imperfect Christians.

7. But, supposing a Christian who dies in a state of Christian imperfection, can escape damnation, and make shift to get to heaven, it is certain that he cannot go into the glorious mansion of perfect Christians, nor shine among the stars of the first magnitude. The wish of my soul is, that, if God's wisdom has so ordered it, imperfect Christians may one day rank among perfect Jews, or perfect heathens. But, even upon this supposition, what will they do with their indwelling sin? For a perfect gentile and a perfect Jew are "without guile," according to their light, as well as a perfect Christian. Lean not then to the doctrine of the propriety and continuance of indwelling sin till death; a doctrine this, on which a Socrates or a Melchizedek would be afraid to venture his heathen perfection and eternal salvation. On the contrary, by Christian perfection ye may rise to the brightest crown of righteousness, and "shine like the sun in the kingdom of your Father." O for a noble ambition to obtain one of the first seats in glory! O for a constant,

evangelical striving, to have the most "abundant entrance ministered unto you into the kingdom of God!" O for a throne among those peculiarly redeemed saints who sing the new song, which none can learn but themselves! It is not Christ's to give those exalted thrones out of mere distinguishing grace: no; they may be forfeited, for they shall be given to those for whom they are prepared; and they are prepared for them who, evangelically speaking, are "worthy." "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy," says Christ; and they shall "sit at my right hand, and at my left, in my kingdom," who shall be worthy of that honour: "for them that honour me, says the Lord, I will honour." "Behold, I come quickly; my reward is with me, and I will render to every man according to his works." And what reward, think ye, will Christ give you, O my dear, mistaken brethren, if he finds you still passing jests upon the doctrine of Christian perfection, which he so strongly recommends? still pleading for the continuance of indwelling sin, which he so greatly abhors?

8. Your whole system of indwelling sin and imputed perfection stands upon two of the most dangerous and false maxims which were ever advanced. The first, which begets antinomian presumption, runs thus: "Sin cannot destroy us either in this world or in the world to come:" and the second, which is productive of antinomian despair, is, "Sin cannot be destroyed in this world." O how hard is it for those who worship where these syren songs pass for sweet songs of Sion, not to be drawn into one of these fatal conclusions! "What need is there of attacking sin with so much eagerness, since, even in the name of the Lord, I cannot destroy it? And why should I resist it with so much watchfulness, since my eternal life and salvation are absolutely secured, and the most poisonous cup of iniquity cannot destroy me, though I should drink of it every day for months or years?" If ye fondly think, that you can neither go backward into a sinful, cursed Egypt, nor yet go forward into a sinless, holy Canaan; how natural will it be for you to say, "Soul, take thy ease," and rest awhile in this wilderness

on the pillow of self-imputed perfection ! O, how many are surprised by the midnight cry in this Laodicean rest ! What numbers meet death with a solifidian, "Lord ! Lord !" in their mouths, and with indwelling sin in their hearts ! And how inexpressible will be our horror, if we perceive our want of holiness and Christian perfection, only when it will be too late to attain them ! To conclude :—

9. Indwelling sin is not only the sting of death, but the very hell of hells, if I may use the expression ; for a sinless saint in a local hell would dwell in an holy, loving God ; and, of consequence, in a spiritual heaven : like Shadrach, in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, he might have devouring flames curling about him ; but, within him, he would still have the flame of divine love, and the joy of a good conscience. But so much of indwelling sin as we carry about us, so much of indwelling hell, so much of the sting which pierces the damned, so much of the spiritual fire which will burn up the wicked, so much of the never-dying worm which will prey upon them, so much of the dreadful instrument which will rack them, so much of Satan's image, which will frighten them, so much of the characteristic by which the devil's children shall be distinguished from the children of God, so much of the black mark whereby the goats shall be separated from the sheep. To plead, therefore, for the continuance of indwelling sin, is no better than to plead for keeping in your hearts one of the sharpest stings of death, and one of the hottest coals in hell-fire. On the other hand, to attain Christian perfection is to have the last feature of Belial's image erased from your loving souls, the last bit of the sting of death extracted from your composed breasts, and the last spark of hell-fire extinguished in your peaceful bosoms. It is to enter into the spiritual rest which remains on earth for the people of God ; a delightful rest this, where your soul will enjoy a calm in the midst of outward storms ; and where your spirit will no longer be tossed by the billows of swelling pride, dissatisfied avarice, pining envy, disappointed hopes, fruitless cares, dubious anxiety, turbulent anger, fretting impatience, and racking unbelief. It is to enjoy that even

state of mind, in which all things will work together for your good. There your love will bear its excellent fruits during the sharpest winter of affliction, as well as in the finest summer of prosperity. There you will be more and more settled in peaceful humility: there you will continually grow in an holy familiarity with the Friend of penitent sinners; and your prospect of eternal felicity will brighten every day.*

Innumerable are the advantages which established, perfect Christians have over carnal, unsettled believers, who continue sold under indwelling sin. And will ye despise those blessings to your dying day, O ye prejudiced imperfectionists? Will ye secure to yourselves the contrary curses? Nay, will ye entail them upon the generations which are yet unborn, by continuing to print, preach, or argue for the continuance of indwelling sin, the capital woe belonging to the devil and his angels? God forbid! We hope better things from you; not doubting but the error of several of you lies chiefly in your judgment, and springs from a misunderstanding of the question, rather than from a malicious opposition to that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. With pleasure we remember and follow St. Jude's loving direction: "Of some" (the simple-hearted, who are seduced into antinomianism) "have compassion; making a difference; and others" (the bigots and obstinate seducers, who wilfully shut their eyes against the truth) "save with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh;" although they will not be ashamed to plead for the continuance of a defiling fountain of carnality in the very heart of all God's people. We are fully persuaded, my dear brethren, that we should wrong you if we did not acknowledge, that

* If the arguments and expostulations contained in these sheets are rational and scriptural, is not Mr. Wesley in the right when he says, that "all preachers should make a point of preaching perfection to believers, constantly, strongly, and explicitly;" and that "all believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it?" And do not all the ministers who preach against Christian perfection, preach against the perfection of Christianity, oppose holiness, resist "the" sanctifying "truth as it is in Jesus," recommend an unscriptural purgatory, plead for sin, instead of striving against it, and delude imperfect Christians into Laodicean ease?

many of you have a sincere desire to be saved by Christ into all purity of heart and life ; and with regard to such imperfectionists our chief complaint is, that their desire is “ not according to knowledge.”

If others of you of a different stamp should laugh at these pages, and, still producing banter instead of argument, should continue to say, “ Where are your perfect Christians ? Show us but one, and we will believe your doctrine of perfection ;” I shall just put them in mind of St. Peter’s awful prophecy : “ Know this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own ” indwelling “ lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his ” spiritual “ coming ”—“ to make an end of sin,” “ throughly to purge his floor, and to burn the chaff with unquenchable fire ? ”—“ For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning : ” all believers are still “ carnal and sold under sin,” as well as father Paul. And if such mockers continue to display their prejudice by such taunts, I shall take the liberty to show them their own picture, by pointing at those prejudiced professors of old who said, concerning the most perfect of all the perfect, “ What sign showest thou,” that we may receive thy doctrine ? “ Come down from the cross, and we will believe.” O the folly and danger of such scoffs ! “ Blessed is he that sitteth not in ” this “ seat of the scornful,” and “ maketh much of them that fear the Lord.” Yea, he is “ blessed ” next to them who “ are undefiled ” (perfect) “ in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord, keep his testimonies, and seek him with their whole heart.” Psalm cxix. 1, 2.

Should ye ask, “ To what purpose do you make all this ado about Christian perfection ? Do those who maintain this doctrine live more holy and useful lives than other believers ? ” I answer :

1. Every thing being equal, they undoubtedly do, if they hold not the truth in unrighteousness ; for, the best principles, when they are cordially embraced, will always produce the best practices. But, alas ! too many merely contend for Christian perfection in a speculative, systematical manner. They recommend it to others with their

lips, as a point of doctrine which makes a part of their religious system, instead of following after it with their hearts, as a blessing which they must attain, if they will not be found as unprepared for judgment as the foolish virgins. These perfectionists are, so far, hypocrites ; nor should their fatal inconsistency make us despise the truth which they contend for, any more than the conduct of thousands, who contend for the truth of the scriptures, while they live in full opposition to the scriptures, ought to make us despise the bible.

2. On the other hand, some gracious persons, like the pious and inconsistent antinomians, whom I have described in the preceding Checks, speak against Christian perfection with their lips, but cannot help following hard after it with their hearts ; and while they do so, they sometimes attain the thing, although they continue to quarrel with the name. These perfect imperfectionists undoubtedly adorn the gospel of Christ far more than the imperfect, hypocritical perfectionists whom I have just described ; and God, who looks at the simplicity of the heart, more than at the consistency of the judgment, pities their mistakes, and accepts their works.

But, 3. Some there are who both maintain doctrinally and practically the necessity of a perfect devotedness of ourselves to God. They hold the truth, and they hold it in wisdom and righteousness : their tempers and conduct enforce it, as well as their words and profession ; and, on this account, they have a great advantage over the two preceding classes of professors. Reason and revelation jointly crown the orthodoxy and faithfulness of these perfect perfectionists, who neither strengthen the hands of the wicked, nor excite the wonder of the judicious, by absurdly pleading for indwelling sin with their lips, while they strive to work righteousness with their hands and hearts. If ye candidly weigh this threefold distinction, I doubt not but ye will blame the irrational inconsistency of holy imperfectionists, condemn the immoral inconsistency of unholy perfectionists, and agree with me, that the most excellent Christian is a consistent, holy perfectionist.

And now, my dear, mistaken brethren, take in good part these plain solutions, expostulations, and reproofs ; and give glory to God, by believing that he can and will yet save you to the uttermost from your evil tempers, if ye humbly come to him by Christ. Day and night ask of him the new heart which keeps the commandments ; and when ye shall have received it, if you keep it with all diligence, sin shall no more pollute it than it polluted our Lord's soul when he said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Burn, in the mean time, the unhallowed pens, and bridle the rash tongues, with which ye have pleaded for the continuance of sin till death. Honour us with the right hand of fellowship ; and, like reconciled brethren, let us, at every opportunity, lovingly fall upon our knees together, to implore the help of Him who "can do far exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Nor let us give Him any rest, till he has perfected all our souls in the charity which "rejoiceth in the truth" without prejudice, in the obedience which keeps the commandments without reserve, and in the perseverance which finds that "in keeping of them there is great reward."

Nothing but such a conduct as this can remove the stumblingblocks which the contentions ye breed have laid in the way of a deistical world. When the men whom your mistakes have hardened will see you listen to scripture and reason, who knows but their prejudices may subside, and some of them may yet say, "See the good which arises from friendly controversy ! See how these Christians desire to be perfected in one ! They now understand one another. Babylonish confusion is at an end ; evangelical truth prevails ; and love, the most delicious fruit of truth, visibly grows to Christian perfection." God grant, that, through the concurrence of your candour, this may soon be the language of all those whom the bigotry of professors has confirmed in their prejudices against Christianity.

Should this plain address have so far worked upon you, my dear brethren, as to abate the force of your aversion to the

doctrine of pure love, or to stagger your unaccountable faith in a death-purgatory; and should you seriously ask which is the way to Christian perfection; I entreat you to pass on to the next section, where, I hope, you will find a scriptural answer to some important questions which, I trust, a few of you are, by this time, ready to propose.

SECTION XIX.

YOUR regard for scripture and reason, and your desire to answer the end of God's predestination by "being conformed to the image of his Son," have happily kept or reclaimed you from the antinomianism exposed in these sheets.

Ye see the absolute necessity of personally "fulfilling the law of Christ;" your bosom glows with desire to "perfect holiness in the fear of God;" and far from blushing to be called "perfectionists," ye openly assert, that a perfect faith productive of perfect love to God and man, is the pearl of great price, for which you are determined to sell all, and which, next to Christ, you will seek early and late, as the one thing needful for your spiritual and eternal welfare. Some directions, therefore, about the manner of seeking this pearl cannot but be acceptable to you if they are scriptural and rational; and such, I humbly trust, are those which follow:—

1. First, if ye would attain an evangelically-sinless perfection, let your full assent to the truth of that deep doctrine firmly stand upon the evangelical foundation of a precept and a promise. A precept without a promise would not sufficiently animate you; nor would a promise without a precept properly bind you; but a divine precept and a divine promise form an unshaken foundation. Let, then, your faith deliberately rest her right foot upon these precepts:—

"Hear, O Israel: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. vi. 4, 5.) "Thou shalt not hate thy

neighbour in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him: thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord; ye shall keep my statutes." Lev. xix. 17—19. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good," &c. "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. x. 12, &c. "Serve God with a perfect heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the imaginations of the thoughts." 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.)

Should unbelief suggest, that these are only old-testament injunctions, trample upon the false suggestion, and rest the same foot of your faith upon the following new-testament precepts: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets." "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," &c.; "that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven," &c. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 17, 44, &c. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. xix. 17.) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. vi. 2.) "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." John xv. 12.) "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery," &c., "Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill," &c.; "therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 8—10.) "This commandment we have from him, That he who loves God, love his brother also." (1 John iv. 21.) "If ye fulfil the royal law, Thou

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” (James ii. 8, 9.) “Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing,” comparatively speaking; “but” under Christ “the keeping of the commandments of God” is the one thing needful. 1 Cor. vii. 19.) “For the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” 1 Tim. i. 5. “Though I have all faith,” &c., “and have not charity, I am nothing.” 1 Cor. xiii. 2. “Whosoever shall keep the whole law” of liberty, “and yet offend in one point,” (in uncharitable respect of persons,) “he is guilty of all,” &c. “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty,” which requires perfect love, and therefore makes no allowance for the least degree of uncharitableness. James ii. 10, 12.

When the right foot of your faith stands on these evangelical precepts and proclamations, lest she should stagger for want of a promise every way adequate to such weighty commandments, let her place her left foot upon the following promises, which are extracted from the old testament :—“The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Deut. xxx. 6. “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isaiah i. 18.) That this promise chiefly refers to sanctification is evident, 1. From the verses which immediately precede it, “Make you clean,” &c. “Cease to do evil, learn to do well,” &c. And, 2. From the verses which immediately follow it, “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel,” or disobey, “ye shall be devoured with the sword.” Again: “I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God,” in a new and peculiar manner: “for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.” “This shall be the covenant that I

will make with the house of Israel ; After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Jeremiah xxiv. 7 ; xxxi. 33. “ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will put away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Ezekiel xxxvi. 25—27.)

And let nobody suppose, that the promises of the “circumcision,” the “cleansing,” the “clean water,” and the “Spirit,” which are mentioned in these scriptures, and by which the hearts of believers are to be made “new,” and God’s law is to be so written therein, that they shall “keep his judgments and do them ;” let none, I say, suppose that these glorious promises belong only to the Jews ; for their full accomplishment peculiarly refers to the Christian dispensation. Besides, if sprinkling of the Spirit were sufficient, under the Jewish dispensation, to raise the plant of Jewish perfection in Jewish believers, how much more will the revelation of “the horn of our salvation,” and the outpourings of the Spirit, raise the plant of Christian perfection in faithful, Christian believers ! And that this revelation of Christ in the Spirit, as well as in the flesh, these effusions of the water of life, these baptisms of fire, which burn up the chaff of sin, thoroughly purge God’s spiritual floor, save us from all our uncleannesses, and deliver us from all our enemies ; that these blessings, I say, are peculiarly promised to Christians, is demonstrable by the following cloud of new-testament declarations and promises :—

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for he hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without” unbelieving “fear,” that is, with perfect love, “in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”

Luke i. 68—75.) “Blessed are the poor in Spirit,” who “thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. v. 3, 6.) “If thou knewest the gift of God,” &c., “thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” “And the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life.” John iv. 10, 14.) “Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me,” when I shall have ascended up on high, to receive gifts for men, “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” to cleanse his soul, and to keep it clean. “But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given” in such a manner as to raise the plant of Christian perfection, “because Jesus was not yet glorified,” and his spiritual dispensation was not yet fully opened. (John vii. 37, &c.) Mr. Wesley, in his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, has published some excellent queries, and proposed them to those who deny perfection to be attainable in this life. They are close to the point, and therefore the two first attack the imperfectionists from the very ground on which I want you to stand. They run thus:—“1. Has there not been a larger measure of the Holy Spirit given under the gospel, than under the Jewish dispensation? If not, in what sense was ‘the Spirit not given’ before Christ was ‘glorified?’ John vii. 39. 2. Was that ‘glory which followed the sufferings of Christ,’ 1 Peter i. 11, an external glory, or an internal, viz., the glory of holiness?” Always rest the doctrine of Christian perfection on this scriptural foundation, and it will stand as firm as revelation itself.

It is allowed on all sides, that the dispensation of John the baptist exceeded that of the other prophets, because it immediately introduced the gospel of Christ, and because John was not only appointed to “preach the baptism of repentance,” but also clearly to point out the very person of Christ, and to “give knowledge of salvation to God’s people by the remission of sins.” Luke i. 77. And nevertheless, John only promised the blessing of the Spirit,

which Christ bestowed when he had received gifts for men. "I indeed," said John, "baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Matt. iii. 11. Such is the importance of this promise, that it is particularly recorded not only by the three other evangelists, (see Mark i. 8, Luke iii. 16, and John i. 26,) but also by our Lord himself, who said just before his ascension, "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts i. 5.

So capital is this promise of the Spirit's stronger influences to raise the rare plant of Christian perfection, that when our Lord speaks of this promise, he emphatically calls it "the promise of the Father;" because it shines among the other promises of the gospel of Christ, as the moon does among the stars. Thus, Acts i. 4: "Wait," says he, "for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me." And again, Luke xxiv. 49: "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." Agreeably to this, St. Peter says, "Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this." He has begun abundantly to fulfil "that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out" (bestow a more abundant measure) "of my Spirit upon all flesh." "Therefore repent and be baptized," that is, make an open profession of your faith, "in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call" to enjoy the full blessings of the Christian dispensation. Acts ii. 16, 17, 33—39. This promise, when it is received in its fulness, is undoubtedly the greatest of all the "exceedingly great and precious promises" which "are given to us, that by them you might be partakers of the divine nature," that is, of pure love and unmixed holiness. 2 Peter i. 4. Have therefore a peculiar eye to it, and to these deep words of our Lord: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you

another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth " and power, " whom the world knows not," &c. : " but ye know him ; for he remaineth with you, and shall be in you." " At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." For " if any man," that is, any believer, " love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 16—23. " Which," says Mr. Wesley, in his note on the place, " implies such a large manifestation of the divine presence and love, that the former in justification, is as nothing in comparison of it." Agreeably to this, the same judicious divine expresses himself thus in another of his publications:—"These virtues"—meekness, humility, and true resignation to God—"are the only wedding garment ; they are the lamps and vessels well furnished with oil. There is nothing that will do instead of them ; they must have their full and perfect work in you, or the soul can never be delivered from its fallen, wrathful state. There is no possibility of salvation but in this. And when the Lamb of God has brought forth his own meekness, &c., in our souls, then are our lamps trimmed, and our virgin hearts made ready for the marriage-feast. This marriage-feast signifies the entrance into the highest state of union that can be between God and the soul in this life. This birth-day of the Spirit of love in our souls, whenever we attain, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God, as will blot out the remembrance of every thing that we called peace or joy before."

To make you believe this important promise with more ardour, consider that our Lord spent some of his last moments in sealing it with his powerful intercession. After having prayed the Father to "sanctify" his disciples "through the truth" firmly embraced by their faith, and powerfully applied by his Spirit, he adds, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them who will believe on me through their word." And what is it that our Lord asks for these believers ? Truly what St. Paul asked for the imperfect believers at Corinth, "even their perfection," 2 Cor. xiii. 9 ; a state of soul this, which Christ describes

thus:—"That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be made one in us," &c. ; "that they may be one, as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 17—23. Our Lord could not pray in vain : it is not to be supposed that the scriptures are silent with respect to the effect of this solemn prayer, an answer to which was to give the world an idea of the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven,—a specimen of the power which introduces believers into the state of Christian perfection ; and therefore we read, that, on the day of pentecost, the kingdom of Satan was powerfully shaken, and the kingdom of God—"righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"—began to come with a new power. Then were thousands wonderfully converted, and clearly justified. Then was the kingdom of heaven taken by force ; and the love of Christ, and of the brethren, began to burn the chaff of selfishness and sin with a force which the world had never seen before. See Acts ii. 42, &c. Some time after, another glorious baptism, or capital outpouring of the Spirit, carried believers farther into the kingdom of the grace which perfects them in one. And therefore we find, that the account which St. Luke gives us of them after this second capital manifestation of the Holy Spirit, in a great degree, answers to our Lord's prayer for their perfection. He had asked "that they all might be one," that they "might be one as the Father and he are one," and that they "might be perfected in one." John xvii. 17, &c. And now a fuller answer is given to his deep request. Take it in the words of the inspired historian:—"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together ; and they were" once more "filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word with" still greater "boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul : neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed was his own ; but they had all things common," &c. "And great grace was upon them all." Acts iv. 31—33. Who does not see in this

account a specimen of that grace which our Lord had asked for believers, when he had prayed that his disciples, and those who would believe on him through their word, might be "perfected in one?"

It may be asked here, whether the multitude of them that believed in those happy days were all perfect in love. I answer, that, if pure love had cast out all selfishness and sinful fear from their hearts, they were undoubtedly made perfect in love. But as God does not usually remove the plague of indwelling sin till it has been discovered and lamented; and as we find, in the two next chapters, an account of the guile of Ananias and his wife, and of the partiality or selfish murmuring of some believers; it seems, that those chiefly who before were strong in the grace of their dispensation arose then into sinless fathers; and that the first love of other believers, through the peculiar blessing of Christ upon his infant church, was so bright and powerful for a time, that little children had, or seemed to have, the strength of young men, and young men the grace of fathers. And, in this case, the account which St. Luke gives of the primitive believers ought to be taken with some restriction: thus, while many of them were perfect in love, many might have the imperfection of their love only covered over by a land-flood of "peace and joy in believing." And, in this case, what is said of their being "all of one heart and mind," and of their "having all things common," &c., may only mean, that the harmony of love had not yet been broken, and that none had yet betrayed any of the uncharitableness for which Christians in after-ages became so conspicuous. With respect to the "great grace" which "was upon them all," this does not necessarily mean, that they were all equally strong in grace; for great unity and happiness may rest upon a whole family, where the difference between a father, a young man, and a child, continues to subsist. However, it is not improbable, that God, to open the dispensation of the Spirit in a manner which might fix the attention of all ages upon its importance and glory, permitted the whole body of believers to take an extraordinary turn together into the Canaan of perfect

love, and to show the world the admirable fruit which grows there, as the spies sent by Joshua took a turn into the good land of promise before they were settled in it, and brought from thence the bunch of grapes which astonished and spirited up the Israelites who had not yet crossed Jordan.

Upon the whole, it is, I think, undeniable, from the four first chapters of the Acts, that a peculiar power of the Spirit is bestowed upon believers, under the gospel of Christ; that this power, through faith on our part, can operate the most sudden and surprising change in our souls; and that, when our faith shall fully embrace the promise of full sanctification, or of a complete circumcision of the heart in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, who kindled so much love on the day of pentecost, that all the primitive believers loved, or seemed to love, each other perfectly, will not fail to help us to "love one another" without sinful self-seeking; and as soon as we do so "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." 1 John iv. 12; John xiv. 23.

Should you ask, "How many baptisms, or effusions of the sanctifying Spirit, are necessary to cleanse a believer from all sin, and to kindle his soul into perfect love?" I reply, that, the effect of a sanctifying truth depending upon the ardour of the faith with which that truth is embraced, and upon the power of the Spirit with which it is applied, I should betray a want of modesty, if I brought the operations of the Holy Ghost, and the energy of faith, under a rule which is not expressly laid down in scripture. If you asked your physician how many doses of physic you must take before all the crudities of your stomach can be carried off, and your appetite perfectly restored, he would probably answer you, that this depends upon the nature of those crudities, the strength of the medicine, and the manner in which your constitution will allow it to operate; and that, in general, you must repeat the dose, as you can bear, till the remedy has fully answered the desired end. I return a similar answer: If one powerful baptism of the Spirit "seals you unto the day of redemption," and "cleanses you from all" moral "filthiness," so

much the better. If two or more are necessary, the Lord can repeat them; "his arm is not shortened that it cannot save," nor is his promise of the Spirit stinted: he says, in general, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father," who is goodness itself, "give his holy" sanctifying "Spirit to them that ask him?" I may, however, venture to say, in general, that, before we can rank among perfect Christians, we must receive so much of the truth and Spirit of Christ by faith, as to have the pure love of God and man shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, and to be filled with the meek and lowly mind which was in Christ. And if one outpouring of the Spirit, one bright manifestation of the sanctifying truth, so empties us of self, as to fill us with the mind of Christ, and with pure love, we are undoubtedly Christians, in the full sense of the word. From the ground of my soul, I therefore subscribe to the answer which a great divine makes to the following objection:—

"But some who are newly justified do come up to this" (Christian perfection). "What, then, will you say to these?" Mr. Wesley replies with great propriety: "If they really do, I will say, They are sanctified, saved from sin in that moment; and that they never need lose what God has given, or feel sin any more. But certainly this is an exempt case: it is otherwise with the generality of those that are justified; they feel in themselves more or less pride, anger, self-will, and an heart bent to backsliding; and till they have gradually mortified these, they are not fully renewed in love. God usually gives a considerable time for men to receive light, to grow in grace, to do and suffer his will, before they are either justified or sanctified. But he does not invariably adhere to this. sometimes he cuts short his work; he does the work of many years in a few weeks, perhaps, in a week, a day, an hour. He justifies or sanctifies both those who have done or suffered nothing, and who have not had time for a gradual growth either in light or grace. And may he not

do what he will with his own? ‘Is thine eye evil, because he is good?’ It need not, therefore, be proved by forty texts of scripture, either that most men are perfected in love at last, or that there is a gradual work of God in the soul; and that, generally speaking, it is a long time, even many years, before sin is destroyed. All this we know; but we know, likewise, that God may, with man’s good leave, cut short his work, in whatever degree he pleases, and do the usual work of many years in a moment. He does so in many instances: and yet there is a gradual work both before and after that moment; so that one may affirm, the work is gradual, another, it is instantaneous, without any manner of contradiction.” Plain Account, page 115, &c. Page 135, the same eminent divine explains himself more fully thus: “It” (Christian perfection) “is constantly preceded and followed by a gradual work. But is it in itself instantaneous or not? In examining this, let us go on step by step. An instantaneous change has been wrought in some believers: none can deny this. Since that change, they enjoy perfect love; they feel this, and this alone; they rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks.’ Now this is all that I mean by ‘perfection;’ therefore these are witnesses of the perfection which I preach. ‘But in some this change was not instantaneous.’ They did not perceive the instant when it was wrought: it is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies; yet there is an instant in which life ceases: and if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it. ‘But if they have this love now, they will lose it.’ They may: but they need not. And whether they do or no, they have it now; they now experience what we teach; they now are all love; they now rejoice, pray, and praise without ceasing. ‘However, sin is only suspended in them, it is not destroyed.’ Call it which you please, they are all love to-day, and they ‘take no thought for the morrow.’” To return:

2. When you firmly assent to the truth of the precepts and promises on which the doctrine of Christian perfection

is founded ; when you understand the meaning of these scriptures,—“ Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth ; ” “ I will send the Comforter ” (the Spirit of truth and holiness) “ unto you ; ” “ God has chosen you to ” eternal “ salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth ; ”—when you see, that the way to Christian perfection is by the word of the gospel of Christ, by faith, and by the Spirit of God ; in the next place, get tolerably clear ideas of this perfection. This is absolutely necessary. If you will hit a mark, you must know where it is. Some people aim at Christian perfection, but, mistaking it for angelical perfection, they shoot above the mark, miss it, and then peevishly give up their hopes. Others place the mark as much too low : hence it is that you hear them profess to have attained Christian perfection, when they have not so much as attained the mental serenity of a philosopher, or the candour of a good-natured, conscientious heathen. In the preceding pages, if I am not mistaken, the mark is fixed according to the rules of scriptural moderation : it is not placed so high, as to make you despair of hitting it, if you do your best in an evangelical manner ; nor yet so low, as to allow you to presume, that you can reach it without exerting all your abilities to the uttermost, in due subordination to the efficacy of Jesus’s blood, and the Spirit’s sanctifying influences.

3. Should ye ask, “ Which is the way to Christian perfection ? Shall we go to it by internal stillness, agreeably to this direction of Moses and David ?—‘ The Lord will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. Stand still, and see the salvation of God.’ ‘ Be still, and know that I am God.’ ‘ Stand in awe, and sin not : commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.’ Or shall we press after it by an internal wrestling, according to these commands of Christ ?—‘ Strive to enter in at the strait gate.’ ‘ The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force,’ ” &c.

According to the evangelical balance of the doctrine of free grace and free will, I answer, that the way to perfection is by the due combination of prevenient, assisting

free grace, and of submissive, assisted free will. Antinomian stillness, therefore, which says, that free grace must do all, is not the way; pharisaic activity, which will do most, if not all, is not the way; join these two partial systems, allowing free grace the lead and high pre-eminence which it so justly claims, and you have the balance of the two gospel axioms; you do justice to the doctrines of mercy and justice, of free grace and free will, of divine faithfulness, in keeping the covenant of grace, and of human faithfulness, in laying hold on that covenant, and keeping within its bounds: in short, you have the scripture method of waiting upon God, which Mr. Wesley describes thus:—

“ Restless, resign’d, for God I wait;
For God my vehement soul stands still.”

To understand these lines, consider that faith, like the virgin Mary, is alternately a receiver and a bestower: first, it passively receives the impregnation of divine grace, saying, “ Behold the handmaid of the Lord: let it be done to me according to thy word;” and then, it actively brings forth its heavenly fruit with earnest labour. “ God worketh in you to will and to do,” says St. Paul. Here he describes the passive office of faith, which submits to, and acquiesces in, every divine dispensation and operation. “ Therefore work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” and, of consequence, with haste, diligence, ardour, and faithfulness. Here the apostle describes the active office of that mother-grace, which carefully lays out the talent she has already received. Would ye then wait aright for Christian perfection? Impartially admit the two gospel axioms, and faithfully reduce them to practice. In order to this, let them meet in your hearts, as the two legs of a pair of compasses meet in the rivet which makes them one compound instrument. Let your faith in the doctrine of free grace, and Christ’s righteousness, fix your mind upon God, as you fix one of the legs of your compasses immovably in the centre of the circle which you are about to draw; so shall you stand still according to the first texts produced in the question. And then, let your faith in the doctrine of free will and

evangelical obedience, make you steadily run the circle of duty around that firm centre; so shall you imitate the other leg of the compasses, which evenly moves around the centre, and traces the circumference of a perfect circle. By this activity subordinate to grace, you will "take the kingdom of heaven by force." When your heart quietly rests in God by faith, as it steadily acts the part of a passive receiver, it resembles the leg of the compasses which rests in the centre of the circle; and then the poet's expressions, "restless, resigned," describe its fixedness in God. But when your heart swiftly moves towards God by faith, as it acts the part of a diligent worker; when your ardent soul follows after God, as a thirsty deer does after the water-brooks; it may be compared to the leg of the compasses which traces the circumference of the circle: and then these words of the poet, "restless" and "vehement," properly belong to it. To go on steadily to perfection, you must therefore endeavour steadily to believe, according to the doctrine of the first gospel axiom; and, as there is opportunity, diligently to work, according to the doctrine of the second. And the moment your faith is steadily fixed in God as in your centre, and your obedience swiftly moves in the circle of duty from the rest and power which you find in that centre you have attained; you are made perfect in the faith which works by love. Your humble faith saves you from pharisaism, your obedient love from antinomianism; and both, in due subordination to Christ, constitute you a just man made perfect according to your dispensation.

4. Another question has also puzzled many sincere perfectionists; and the solution of it may remove a considerable hinderance out of your way. "Is Christian perfection," say they, "~~to be instantaneously~~ brought down to us? or are we ~~gradually~~ to grow up to it?" Shall we be made perfect in love by an habit of holiness suddenly infused into us, or by acts of feeble faith and feeble love so frequently repeated as to become strong, habitual, and evangelically natural to us, according to the well-known maxim, 'A strong habit is a second nature?'

Both ways are good; and instances of some believers

gradually perfected, and of others, comparatively speaking, instantaneously fixed in perfect love, might probably be produced, if we were acquainted with the experiences of all those who have died in a state of evangelical perfection. It may be with the root of sin, as it is with its fruit: some souls parley many years, before they can be persuaded to give up all their outward sins; and others part with them as it were instantaneously. You may compare the former to those besieged towns which make a long resistance, or to those mothers who go through a tedious and lingering labour; and the latter resemble those fortresses which are surprised and carried by storm, or those women who are delivered almost as soon as labour comes upon them. Travellers inform us that vegetation is so quick and powerful in some warm climates, that the seeds of some vegetables yield a salad in less than twenty-four hours. Should a northern philosopher say, "Impossible!" and should an English gardener exclaim against such mushroom salad, they would only expose their prejudices, as do those who decry instantaneous justification, or mock at the possibility of the instantaneous destruction of indwelling sin.

For where is the absurdity of this doctrine? If the light of a candle brought into a dark room can instantly expel the darkness; and if, upon opening your shutters at noon, your gloomy apartment can instantaneously be filled with meridian light; why might not the instantaneous rending of the veil of unbelief, or the sudden and full opening of the eye of your faith, instantly fill your soul with the light of truth and the fire of love; supposing the sun of righteousness arise upon you with powerful healing in his wings? May not the Sanctifier descend upon your waiting soul, as quickly as the Spirit descended upon our Lord at his baptism? Did it not descend as a dove, that is, with the soft motion of a dove, which swiftly shoots down, and instantly lights? A good man said once, with truth, "A mote is little when it is compared to the sun; but I am far less before God." Alluding to this comparison, I ask, If the sun could instantly kindle a mote; nay, if a burning-glass can in a moment calcine a

bone, and turn a stone to lime ; and if the dim flame of a candle can in the twinkling of an eye destroy the flying insect which comes within its sphere ; how unscriptural and irrational is it to suppose, that, when God fully baptizes a soul with his sanctifying Spirit and with the celestial fire of his love, he cannot in an instant destroy the man of sin, burn up the chaff of corruption, melt the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and kindle the believing soul into pure seraphic love !

An appeal to parallel cases may throw some light upon the question which I answer. If you were sick, and asked of God the perfect recovery of your health, how would you look for it ? Would you expect to have your strength restored you at once, without any external means, as the lepers who were instantly cleansed ; and as the paralytic, who, at our Lord's word, took up the bed on which he lay, and carried it away upon his shoulders ? or, by using some external means of a slower operation, as the "ten lepers" did, who were more gradually cleansed "as they went to show themselves to the priests ?" or, as king Hezekiah, whose gradual but equally sure recovery was owing to God's blessing upon the poultice of figs prescribed by Isaiah ? Again : if you were blind, and besought the Lord to give you perfect human sight, how should you wait for it ? as Bartimeus, whose eyes were opened in an instant ? or, as the man who received his sight by degrees ? At first he saw nothing ; by and by he confusedly discovered the objects before him ; but at last he "saw all things clearly !" Would ye not earnestly wait for an answer to your prayers now ; leaving to divine wisdom the particular manner of your recovery ? And why should ye not go and do likewise, with respect to the dreadful disorder which we call "indwelling sin ?"

If our hearts are "purified by faith," as the scripture expressly testifies ; if the faith which peculiarly purifies the heart of Christians, is a faith in "the promise of the Father," which promise was made by the Son, and directly points at a peculiar effusion of the Holy Ghost, the purifier of spirits ; if we may believe in a moment ; and if God may, in a moment, seal our sanctifying faith by sending

us a fulness of his sanctifying Spirit; if this, I say, is the case, does it not follow, that to deny the possibility of the instantaneous destruction of sin is to deny, contrary to scripture and matter of fact, that we can make an instantaneous act of faith in the sanctifying promise of the Father, and in the all-cleansing blood of the Son, and that God can seal that act by the instantaneous operation of his Spirit? which St. Paul calls "the circumcision of the heart in" or by "the Spirit," according to the Lord's ancient promise, "I will circumcise thy heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Where is the absurdity of believing that the God of all grace can now give an answer to the poet's rational and evangelical request?—

"Open my faith's interior eye;
Display thy glory from above;
And sinful self shall sink and die,
Lost in astonishment and love."

If a momentary display of Christ's bodily glory could in an instant turn Saul, the blaspheming, bloody persecutor, into Paul, the praying, gentle apostle; if a sudden sight of Christ's hands could, in a moment, root up from Thomas's heart that detestable resolution, "I will not believe," and produce that deep confession of faith, "My Lord and my God!" what cannot the display of Christ's spiritual glory operate in a believing soul, to which he manifests himself "according to that power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself?" Again: if Christ's body could, in an instant, become so glorious on the mount, that his very garments partook of the sudden irradiation, became not only free from every spot, but also "white as the light," "shining exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them;" and if our bodies "shall be changed," if "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" why may not our believing souls, when they fully submit to God's terms, be fully changed, fully "turned from the power" of Satan unto God? When the Holy Ghost says, "Now is the day of sal-

vation," does he exclude salvation from heart iniquity? If Christ now deserves fully the name of "Jesus, because he" fully "saves his" believing "people from their sins;" and if now the gospel trumpet sounds, and sinners arise from the dead; why should we not upon the performance of the condition be changed in a moment from indwelling sin to indwelling holiness? Why should we not pass in the twinkling of an eye, or in a short time, from indwelling death to indwelling life?

This is not all: if you deny the possibility of a quick destruction of indwelling sin, you send to hell, or to some unscriptural purgatory, not only the dying thief, but also all those martyrs who suddenly embraced the Christian faith, and were instantly put to death by bloody persecutors for confessing the faith which they had just embraced. And if you allow, that God may "cut his work short in righteousness" in such a case, why not in other cases? why not, especially, when a believer confesses his indwelling sin, ardently prays that Christ would, and sincerely believes that Christ can, now "cleanse from all unrighteousness?"

Nobody is so apt to laugh at the instantaneous destruction of sin as the Calvinists; and yet, such is the inconsistency which characterizes some men, their doctrine of purgatory is built upon it. For, if you credit them, all dying believers have a nature which is still morally corrupted, and a heart which is yet desperately wicked. These believers, still full of indwelling sin, instantaneously breathe out their last, and, without any peculiar act of faith, without any peculiar outpouring of the sanctifying Spirit, corruption is instantaneously gone. The indwelling man of sin has passed through the Geneva purgatory, he is entirely consumed, and, behold! the souls which would not hear of the instantaneous act of sanctifying faith which receives the indwelling Spirit of holiness,—the souls which pleaded hard for the continuance of indwelling sin,—are now completely sinless; and in the twinkling of an eye they appear in the third heaven among the spirits of just Christians made perfect in love! Such is the doctrine of our opponents; and yet, they think it incredible

that God should do for us, while we pray in faith, what they suppose death will do for them, when they lie in his cold arms, perhaps delirious or senseless !

On the other hand, to deny that imperfect believers may and do gradually grow in grace, and, of course, that the remains of their sins may and do gradually decay, is as absurd as to deny that God waters the earth by daily dews, as well as by thunder-showers ; it is as ridiculous as to assert, that nobody is carried off by lingering disorders, but that all men die suddenly, or a few hours after they are taken ill.

I use these comparisons about death, to throw some light upon the question which I solve, and not to insinuate, that the decay and destruction of sin run parallel to the decay and dissolution of the body, and that, of course, sin must end with our bodily life. Were I to admit this unscriptural tenet, I should build again what I have all along endeavoured to destroy ; and, as I love consistency, I should promise eternal salvation to all unbelievers,—for unbelievers, I presume, will die, that is, will go into the Geneva purgatory, as well as believers. Nor do I see why death should not be able to destroy the van and the main body of sin's forces, if it can so readily cut the rear—the remains of sin—in pieces.

From the preceding observations it appears, that believers generally go to Christian perfection, as the disciples went to the other side of the sea of Galilee,—they toiled some time very hard, and with little success ; but after they had “rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He said to them, It is I ; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship ; and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.” Just so we toil till our faith discovers Christ in the promise, and welcomes him into our hearts ; and such is the effect of his presence, that immediately we arrive at the land of perfection. Or, to use another illustration, God says to believers, “Go to the Canaan of perfect love. Arise ; why do ye tarry ? Wash away the remains of sin, calling,” that is, believing, “on the name of the Lord.” And if they

submit to the obedience of faith, he deals with them as he did with the evangelist Philip, to whom he had said, "Arise, and go towards the south;" for, when they arise and run, as Philip did, the Spirit of the Lord takes them, as he did the evangelist, and they are found in the new Jerusalem, as "Philip was found at Azotus." They dwell in God, or in perfect love; and God, or perfect love, dwells in them.

Hence it follows, that the most evangelical method of following after the perfection to which we are immediately called is, that of seeking it now, by endeavouring fully to lay hold on the promise of that perfection, through faith, just as if our repeated acts of obedience could never help us forward. But, in the mean time, we should do the work of faith, and repeat our internal and external acts of obedience, with as much earnestness and faithfulness, according to our present power, as if we were sure to enter into rest merely by a diligent use of our talents, and a faithful exertion of the powers which divine grace has bestowed upon us. If we do not attend to the first of these directions, we shall seek to be sanctified by works, like the pharisees; and if we disregard the second, we shall slide into solifidian sloth with the antinomians.

This double direction is founded upon the connexion of the two gospel axioms. If the second axiom, which implies the doctrine of free will, were false, I would only say, Be still; or rather, do nothing: free grace alone will do all in you and for you. But as this axiom is as true as the first, I must add, Strive in humble subordination to free grace; for Christ saith, "To him that hath" initiating grace to purpose, more grace "shall be given, and he shall have abundance;" his faithful and equitable Benefactor will give him the reward of perfecting grace.

5. Beware, therefore, of unscriptural refinements. Set out for the Canaan of perfect love, with a firm resolution to labour for the rest which remains on earth for the people of God. Some good, mistaken men, "wise above what is written," and fond of striking out paths which were unknown to the apostles,—new paths, marked out by voluntary humility, and leading to antinomianism;

some people of that stamp, I say, have made it their business, from the days of heated Augustine, to decry making resolutions. They represent this practice as a branch of what they are pleased to call "legality." They insinuate, that it is utterly inconsistent with the knowledge of our inconstancy and weakness. In a word, they frighten us from the first step to Christian perfection.—from an humble, evangelical determination to run till we reach the prize, or, if you please, to go down till we come to the lowest place. It may not be amiss to point out the ground of their mistake. Once they broke the balance of the gospel axioms, by leaning too much towards free will, and by not laying their first and principal stress upon free grace. God, to bring them to the evangelical mean, refused his blessing to their unevangelical willing and running: hence it is that their self-righteous resolutions "started aside like a broken bow." When they found out their mistake, instead of coming back to the line of moderation, they fled to the other extreme: casting all their weights into the scale of free grace, they absurdly formed a resolution never to form a resolution; and, determining not to throw one determination into the scale of free will, they began to draw all the believers they met with into the ditch of a slothful quietism and Laodicean stillness.

You will never steadily go on to perfection, unless you get over this mistake. Let the imperfectionists laugh at you for making humble resolutions; but go on, "steadfastly purposing to lead a new life," as says our church: and, in order to this, steadfastly purpose to get a new heart, in the full sense of the word; for, so long as your heart will continue partly unrenewed, your life will be partly unholy; and therefore St. James justly observes, that, "if any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man," he loves God with all his heart, his heart is fully renewed, it being impossible that an heart still tainted in part with vanity and guile should always dictate the words of sincerity and love. Your good resolutions need not fail; nor will they fail, if, under a due sense of the fickleness and helplessness of your unassisted free will,

you properly depend upon God's faithfulness and assistance. However, should they fail, as they probably will do, more than once, be not discouraged, but repent, search out the cause, and, in the strength of free grace, let your assisted free will renew your evangelical purpose, till the Lord seals it with his mighty fiat, and says, "Let it be done to thee according to thy" resolving "faith." It is much better to be laughed at as "poor creatures who know nothing of themselves," than to be deluded as foolish virgins, who fondly imagine that their vessels are full of imputed oil. Take, therefore, "the sword of the Spirit," and boldly cut this dangerous snare in pieces. Conscious of your impotence, and yet laying out your talent of free will, say with the prodigal son, "I will arise, and go to my father." Say with David, "I will love thee, O Lord my God." "I will behold thy face in righteousness." "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress; I will keep it as it were with a bridle." "I have said, that I would keep thy word." "The proud," and they who are humble in an unscriptural way, "have had me exceedingly in derision; but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart." "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." Say with St. Paul, "I am determined not to know any thing, save Jesus, and him crucified;" and with Jacob, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." And, to sum up all good resolutions in one, if you are a member of the church of England, say, "I have engaged to renounce all the vanities of this wicked world, all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and all the works of the devil; to believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and to keep God's commandments all the days of my life; that is, I have most solemnly resolved to be a perfect Christian; and this resolution I have publicly sealed, by receiving the two sacraments upon it,—baptism, after my parents and sponsors had laid me under this blessed vow,—and the Lord's supper, after I had personally ratified, in the bishop's presence, what they had done. Nor do I only think that I am bound to keep this vow, but, 'by God's grace, so I will; and I heartily thank our heavenly

Father, that he has called me to this state of salvation," and Christian perfection ; "and I pray unto him, to give me his grace, that I may" not only attain it, but also "continue in the same unto my life's end." Church Catechism.

"Much diligence," says Kempis, "is necessary to him that will profit much. If he who firmly purposeth often faileth, what shall he do who seldom or feebly purposeth anything?" But, I say it again and again, do not lean upon your free will and good purposes, so as to encroach upon the glorious pre-eminence of free grace. Let the first gospel axiom stand invariably in its honourable place. Lay your principal stress upon divine mercy ; and say with the good man whom I have just quoted, "Help me, O Lord God, in thy holy service, and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly"

In following this method, ye will do the two gospel axioms justice: ye will so depend upon God's free grace, as not to fall into pharisaic running; and ye will so exert your own free will, as not to slide into antinomian sloth. Your course lies exactly between these rocks. To pass these perilous straits your resolving heart must acquire an heavenly polarity. Through the spiritually magnetic touch of Christ, "the corner stone," your soul must learn to point towards faith and works, or, if you please, towards a due submission to free grace, and a due exertion of free will, as the opposite ends of the needle of a compass point towards the north and the south.

6. From this direction flows the following advice:—Resolve to be perfect in yourselves, but not of yourselves. The antinomians boast that they are perfect only in their heavenly Representative. Christ was filled with perfect humility and love; they are perfect in his person; they need not a perfection of humble love in themselves. To avoid their error, be perfect in yourselves, and not in another; let your perfection of humility and love be inherent; let it dwell in you. Let it fill your own heart, and influence your own life; so shall you avoid the delusion of the virgins who give you to understand, that

the oil of their perfection is all contained in that sacred vessel which formerly hung on the cross, and therefore their salvation is finished, they have oil enough in that rich vessel, manna enough and to spare in that golden pot. Christ's heart was perfect ; and therefore theirs may safely remain imperfect, yea, full of indwelling sin, till death, the messenger of the bridegroom, come to cleanse them, and fill them with perfect love at the midnight cry. Delusive hope ! Can anything be more absurd than for a sapless, dry branch to fancy that it has sap and moisture enough in the vine which it cumbars ? or for an impenitent adulterer to boast, that "in the Lord he has" chastity and "righteousness ?" Where did Christ ever say, "Have salt in another ?" Does he not say, "Take heed that ye be not deceived ?" "Have salt in yourselves ?" Mark ix. 50. Does he not impute the destruction of stony ground hearers to their "not having root in themselves ?" Matt. xiii. 21. If it was the patient man's comfort, that "the root of the matter was found in him," is it not deplorable to hear modern believers say, without any explanatory clause, that they have nothing but sin in themselves ? But is it enough to have the root in ourselves ? Must we not also have "the fruit ;" yea, "be filled with the fruits of righteousness ?" Phil. i. 11. Is it not St. Peter's doctrine, where he says, "If these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ ?" 2 Peter i. 8. And is it not that of David, where he prays, "Create in me a clean heart ?" &c. Away then with all antinomian refinements ; and if, with St. Paul, you will have salvation and rejoicing in yourselves, and not in another, make sure of holiness and perfection in yourselves, and not in another.

But while you endeavour to avoid the snare of the antinomians, do not run into that of the pharisees, who will have their perfection of themselves ; and therefore, by their own unevangelical efforts, self-concerted willings, and self-prescribed runnings, endeavour to "raise sparks of their own kindling," and to "warm themselves by" their own painted fires, and fruitless agitations. Feel your impotence. Own that "no man has quickened" and per-

fectcd "his own soul." Be contented to invite, receive, and welcome the light of life ; but never attempt to reform or to engross it. It is your duty to wait for the morning light, and to rejoice when it visits you ; but if you grow so self-conceited as to say, "I will create a sun ; let there be light ;" or if, when the light visits your eyes, you say, "I will bear a stock of light ; I will so fill my eyes with light to-day, that to-morrow I shall almost be able to do my work without the sun, or at least without a constant dependence upon its beams ;" would ye not betray a species of self-deifying idolatry, and satanical pride ? If our Lord himself, as "Son of man," would not have one grain of human goodness of himself ; if he said, "Why callest thou me good ? there is none good," self-good, or good of himself, "but God ;" who can wonder enough at those proud Christians, who claim some self-originated goodness ; boasting of what they have received, as if they had not received it ; or using what they have received without an humble sense of their constant dependence upon their heavenly benefactor ? To avoid this horrid delusion of the pharisees, learn to see, to feel, and to acknowledge that of the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost, are all your Urim and Thummim, your "lights" and "perfections." And while the Lord says, "From me is thy fruit found," (Hosea xiv. 8,) bow at his footstool, and gratefully reply, "Of thy fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." John i. 16. For thou art "the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift." James i. 17. "Of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things. To thee," therefore, "be the glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi. 36.

7. You will have this humble and thankful disposition, if you let your repentance cast deeper roots. For if Christian perfection implies a forsaking all inward as well as outward sin ; and if true repentance is a grace "whereby we forsake sin ;" it follows, that, to attain Christian perfection, we must so follow our Lord's evangelical precept, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," as to leave no sin, no bosom-sin, no heart-sin, no indwelling sin, unrepented of, and, of consequence, unforsaken. He,

whose heart is still full of indwelling sin has no more truly repented of indwelling sin, than the man whose mouth is still defiled with filthy talking and jesting has truly repented of his ribaldry. The deeper our sorrow for and detestation of indwelling sin is, the more penitently do we confess "the plague of our heart;" and when we properly confess it, we inherit the blessing promised in these words: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

To promote this deep repentance, consider how many spiritual evils still haunt your breast. Look into the inward chamber of imagery, where assuming self-love, surrounded by a multitude of vain thoughts, foolish desires, and wild imaginations, keeps her court. Grieve that your heart, which should be all flesh, is yet partly stone; that your soul, which should be only a temple for the Holy Ghost, is yet so frequently turned into a den of thieves, an hole for the cockatrice, a nest for a brood of spiritual vipers,—for the remains of envy, jealousy, fretfulness, anger, pride, impatience, peevishness, formality, sloth, prejudice, bigotry, carnal confidence, evil shame, self-righteousness, tormenting fears, uncharitable suspicions, idolatrous love, and I know not how many of the evils which form the retinue of hypocrisy and unbelief. Through grace, detect these evils by a close attention to what passes in your own heart at all times, but especially in an hour of temptation. By frequent and deep confession, drag out all these abominations; these sins which would not have Christ to reign alone over you, bring before him, place them in the light of his countenance; and, if you do it in faith, that light, and the warmth of his love, will kill them, as the light and heat of the sun kill the worms which the plough turns up to the open air in a dry summer's day.

Nor plead that you can do nothing: for, by the help of Christ, who is always ready to assist the helpless, ye can solemnly say upon your knees, what ye have probably said in an airy manner to your professing friends. If ye ever acknowledged to them, that your heart is deceitful, prone to leave

undone what ye ought to do, and ready to do what ye ought to leave undone, ye can undoubtedly make the same confession to God. Complain to him who can help you, as ye have done to those who cannot; lament, as you are able, the darkness of your mind, the stiffness of your will, the dulness or exorbitancy of your affections; and importunately entreat the God of all grace to renew a right spirit within you. If ye "sorrow after this godly sort, what carefulness" will be "wrought in you, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, yea. what revenge!" Ye will then sing in faith what the imperfectionists sing in unbelief:—

"O how I hate those lusts of mine
That crucified my God;
Those sins that pierced and nail'd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood!

"Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart hath so decreed;
Nor will I spare those guilty things
That made my Saviour bleed.

"Whilst with a melting, broken heart,
My murder'd Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murderers too."

8. Closely connected with this deep repentance is the practice of a judicious, universal self-denial. "If thou wilt be perfect," says our Lord, "deny thyself, take up thy cross daily, and follow me." "He that loveth father or mother," much more, he that loveth praise, pleasure, or money, "more than me, is not worthy of me." Nay, "whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose it for my sake, shall find it." Many desire to live and reign with Christ, but few choose to suffer and die with him. However, as the way of the cross leads to heaven, it undoubtedly leads to Christian perfection. To avoid the cross, therefore, or to decline drinking the cup of vinegar and gall which God permits your friends or foes to mix for you, is to throw away the aloes which divine wisdom puts to the breasts of the mother of harlots, to wean you from her and her witchcrafts; it is to refuse a medicine which is kindly prepared to restore

your health and appetite ; in a word, it is to renounce the Physician who heals all our infirmities, when we take his bitter draughts, submit to have our imposthumes opened by his sharp lancet, and yield to have our proud flesh wasted away by his painful caustics. Our Lord "was made" a "perfect" Saviour "through sufferings ;" and we may be made perfect Christians in the same manner ; we may be called to suffer, till all that which we have brought out of spiritual Egypt is consumed in an howling wilderness, in a dismal Gethsemane, or on a shameful Calvary. Should this lot be reserved for us, let us not imitate our Lord's imperfect disciples, who "forsook him, and fled ;" but let us stand the fiery trial, till all our fetters are melted, and all our dross is purged away. Fire is of a purgative nature ; it separates the dross from the gold ; and the fiercer it is, the more quick and powerful is its operation. "He that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy," &c., "when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Isaiah iv. 3, 4. "I will bring the third part through the fire," saith the Lord, "and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried : they shall call on my name, and I will hear them ; I will say, It is my people ; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Zech. xiii. 9. Therefore, if the Lord should suffer the best men in his camp, or the strongest men in satan's army, to cast you into a furnace of fiery temptations, come not out of it till you are called ; "let patience have its perfect work ;" meekly keep your trying station till your heart is disengaged from all that is earthly, and till the sense of God's preserving power kindles in you such a faith in his omnipotent love as few experimentally know but they who have seen themselves like the mysterious bush in Horeb, burning, and yet unconsumed ; or they who can say with St. Paul, "We are killed all the day long ; and, behold, we live !"

"Temptations," says Kempis, "are often very profitable to men, though they be troublesome and grievous ; for

in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed. All the saints have passed through, and profited by, many tribulations; and they that could not bear temptations, became reprobates, and fell away." "My son," adds the author of Ecclesiasticus, ii. 1—5, "if thou come to serve the Lord,"—"in the" perfect "beauty of holiness,"—"prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright; constantly endure; and make not haste in the time of trouble. Whatever is brought upon thee take cheerfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate. For gold is tried" and purified "in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity." And, therefore, says St. James, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for, when he is tried," if he stands the fiery trial, "he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him"—with the love which "endureth" temptation and "all things," that is, with perfect love. James i. 12. Patiently endure, then, when God "for a season, if need be," will suffer you to "be in heaviness through manifold temptations." By this means, "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 7.

9. Deep repentance is good, gospel self-denial is excellent, and a degree of patient resignation in trials is of unspeakable use to attain the perfection of love; but as "faith" immediately "works by love," it is of far more immediate use to purify the soul. Hence it is that Christ, the prophets, and the apostles so strongly insist upon faith; assuring us, that "if we will not believe, we shall not be established;" that "if we will believe, we shall see the glory of God," "we shall be saved," and the "rivers of living water shall flow from our inmost souls;" that "our hearts are purified by faith;" and that "we are saved by grace through faith." They tell us, that "Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," but that it should be "holy

and without blemish." Now, if believers are to be cleansed and made without blemish by the word, which testifies of the all-atoning blood, and the love of the Spirit, it is evident, that they are to be sanctified by faith; for faith, or believing, has as necessary a reference to the word, as eating has to food. For the same reason the apostle observes, that "they who believe enter into rest;" that, "a promise being given us to enter in," we should "take care not to fall short of it through unbelief;" that we ought to take warning by the Israelites, who "could not enter" into the land of promise, "through unbelief;" that we are "filled with all joy and peace in believing;" and that "Christ is able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God through him." Now, "coming," in the scripture language, is another expression for believing: "He that cometh to God," says the apostle, "must believe." Hence it appears, that faith is peculiarly necessary to those who will be "saved to the uttermost," especially a firm faith in the capital promise of the gospel of Christ,—the promise of "the Spirit of holiness," from the Father, through the Son. For, "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Or how can they earnestly plead the truth, and steadily wait for the performance, of a promise in which they have no faith? This doctrine of faith is supported by Peter's words: "God, who knoweth the hearts" of penitent believers, "bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, and purifying their hearts by faith." Acts xv. 8, 9. For the same Spirit of faith which initially purifies our hearts, when we cordially believe the pardoning love of God, completely cleanses them, when we fully believe his sanctifying love.

10. This direction about faith being of the utmost importance, I shall confirm and explain it by an extract from Mr. Wesley's forty-third sermon, which points out "the scripture way of salvation." "Though it be allowed," says this judicious divine, "that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation, yet they are not necessary either in the same sense with faith, or in the same degree. Not in the same degree; for these fruits are only

necessary conditionally,—if there be time and opportunity for them; otherwise a man may be sanctified without them: but he cannot be sanctified without faith. Likewise, let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not sanctified till he believes; but the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified. Not in the same sense; for this repentance and these fruits are only remotely necessary, necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it; whereas faith is immediately and directly necessary to sanctification. It remains that faith is the only condition which is immediately and proximately necessary to sanctification.

“ But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin, and perfected in love? It is a divine evidence and conviction, 1. That God hath promised it in the holy scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this, there is no moving one step further. And one would imagine, there needed not one word more to satisfy a reasonable man of this than the ancient promise: ‘Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.’ How clearly does this express the being perfected in love! how strongly imply the being saved from all sin! For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein? 2. It is a divine evidence and conviction, that what God has promised he is able to perform. Admitting, therefore, that ‘with men it is impossible to bring ‘a clean thing out of an unclean,’ to purify the heart from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness; yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing ‘with God all things are possible.’ 3. It is an evidence and conviction, that he is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is his will. We may therefore boldly say at any point of time, ‘Now is the day of salvation. Behold, all things are now ready; come to the marriage.’ 4. To this confidence—that God is both

able and willing to sanctify us now—there needs to be added 'one thing more,—a divine evidence and conviction, that he doeth it. In that hour it is done. God says to the inmost soul, 'According to thy faith be it unto thee.' Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin, it is clean from all unrighteousness."

Those who have low ideas of faith will probably be surprised to see how much Mr. Wesley ascribes to that Christian grace; and to inquire why he so nearly connects our believing that God cleanses us from all sin, with God's actual cleansing of us from all sin. But their wonder will cease if they consider the definition which this divine gives of faith in the same sermon. "Faith in general," says he, "is defined by the apostle, an evidence, a divine evidence and conviction, (the word used by the apostle means both,) of things not seen, not visible, nor perceivable either by sight or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural evidence of God and of the things of God; a kind of spiritual light exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof. Accordingly the scripture speaks of God's giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul: 'God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' And elsewhere the same apostle speaks of 'the eyes of our understanding being opened.' By this twofold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our souls both opened and enlightened, we see the things which the natural 'eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard.' We have a prospect of the invisible things of God; we see the spiritual world which is all round about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties than if it had no being; and we see the eternal world piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed."

From this striking definition of faith it is evident that the doctrine of this address exactly coincides with Mr. Wesley's sermon, with this verbal difference only, that

what he calls "faith implying a twofold operation of the Spirit, productive of spiritual light and supernatural sight," I have called "faith apprehending a sanctifying baptism, or outpouring, of the Spirit." His mode of expression savours more of the rational divine who logically divides the truth, in order to render its several parts conspicuous; and I keep closer to the words of the scriptures, which, I hope, will frighten no candid protestant. I make this remark for the sake of those who fancy, that when a doctrine is clothed with expressions which are not quite familiar to them, it is a new doctrine, although these expressions should be as scriptural as those of a baptism or outpouring of the Spirit, which are used by some of the prophets, by John the baptist, by the four evangelists, and by Christ himself.

I have already pointed out the close connexion there is between an act of faith which fully apprehends the sanctifying promise of the Father, and the power of the Spirit of Christ, which makes an end of moral corruption by forcing the lingering man of sin instantaneously to breathe out his last. Mr. Wesley in the above-quoted sermon touches upon this delicate subject in so clear and concise a manner, that while his discourse is before me, for the sake of those who have it not at hand, I shall transcribe the whole passage, and, by this means, put the seal of that eminent divine to what I have advanced in the preceding pages about sanctifying faith, and the quick destruction of sin.

"Does God work this great work in the soul gradually or instantaneously? Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some, I mean in this sense,—they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin 'by the breath of his mouth,' in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so he generally does,—a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. Thou therefore look for it every moment. Look for it in the way above described; in all those good works, whereunto thou art created anew in Christ Jesus. There

is then no danger ; you can be no worse, if you are no better, for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope ; it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment. Why not this hour, this moment ? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done first, before you are sanctified. You think, ‘I must first be or do thus or thus.’ Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it as you are ; and if as you are, then expect it now. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connexion between these three points,—expect it by faith, expect it as you are, and expect it now. To deny one of them is to deny them all : to allow one is to allow them all. Do you believe we are sanctified by faith ? Be true then to your principle, and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse, as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but ‘Christ died.’ And if you look for it as you are, then expect it now. Stay for nothing : why should you ? Christ is ready, and he is all you want. He is waiting for you ; he is at the door ! Let your inmost soul cry out,

‘Come in, come in, thou heavenly guest !
 Nor hence again remove :
 But sup with me, and let the feast
 Be everlasting love.’”

11. Social prayer is closely connected with faith, in the capital promise of the sanctifying Spirit ; and therefore I earnestly recommend that mean of grace, where it can be had, as being eminently conducive to the attaining of Christian perfection. When many believing hearts are lifted up, and wrestle with God in prayer together, you may compare them to many diligent hands which work a large machine. At such times, particularly, the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the windows of heaven are opened, and “rivers of living water flow” from the heart of obedient believers.

“ In Christ when brethren join,
 And follow after peace,
 The fellowship divine
 He promises to bless,
 His chiefest graces to bestow
 Where two or three are met below.

“ Where unity takes place,
 The joys of heaven we prove;
 This is the gospel grace,
 The unction from above,
 The Spirit on all believers shed,
 Descending swift from Christ their head.”

Accordingly we read, that, when God powerfully opened the kingdom of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the disciples “were all with one accord in one place.” And when he confirmed that kingdom, they were lifting up “their voice to God with one accord.” See Acts ii. 1, and iv. 24. Thus also the believers at Samaria were filled with the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, while Peter and John prayed with them, and laid hands upon them.

12. But perhaps thou art alone. As a solitary bird which sitteth on the housetop, thou lookest for a companion who may go with thee through the deepest travail of the regeneration. But alas! thou lookest in vain; all the professors about thee seem satisfied with their former experiences, and with self-imputed or self-conceited perfection. When thou givest them a hint of thy want of power from on high, and of thy hunger and thirst after a fulness of righteousness, they do not sympathize with thee. And indeed how can they? “They are full” already, “they reign without thee, they have need of nothing.” They do not sensibly want that “God would grant them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may comprehend with all saints” perfected in love, “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Eph. iii. 16, &c. They look upon thee as a whimsical person, full of singular notions; and they rather damp,

than enliven, thy hopes. Thy circumstances are sad ; but do not give place to despair, no, not for a moment. In the name of Christ, who could not get even Peter, James, and John to watch with him one hour, and who was obliged to go through his agony alone ; in his name, I say, “cast not away thy confidence, which has great recompence of reward.” Under all thy discouragements, remember that, after all, divine grace is not confined to numbers, any more than to a few. When all outward helps fail thee, make the more of Christ, “on whom” sufficient “help is laid” for thee,—Christ, who says, “I will go with thee through fire and water ;” the former “shall not burn thee, nor” the latter “drown thee.” Jacob was alone when he wrestled with the angel, yet he prevailed ; and if “the servant is not above his master,” wonder not that it should be said of thee, as of thy Lord, when he went through his greatest temptations, “Of the people there was none with him.”

Should thy conflicts be “with confused noise, with burning, and fuel of fire ;” should thy “Jerusalem be rebuilt in troublous times ;” should the Lord “shake not the earth only, but also heaven ;” should “deep call unto deep at the noise of his waterspouts ;” should “all his waves and billows go over thee ;” should thy patience be tried to the uttermost ; remember how in years past thou hast tried the patience of God, nor be discouraged : an extremity and a storm are often God’s opportunity. A blast of temptation, and a shaking of all thy foundations, may introduce the fulness of God to thy soul, and answer the end of the rushing wind, and of the shaking, which formerly accompanied the first great manifestations of the Spirit. The Jews still expect the coming of the Messiah in the flesh, and they particularly expect it in a storm. When lightnings flash, when thunders roar, when a strong wind shakes their houses, and the tempestuous sky seems to rush down in thunder-showers ; then some of them particularly open their doors and windows to entertain their wished-for deliverer. Do spiritually, what they do carnally. Constantly wait for full “power from on high ;” but especially when a storm of affliction, temptation, or

distress overtakes thee ; or when thy convictions and desires raise thee above thyself, as the waters of the flood raised Noah's ark above the earth ; then be particularly careful to throw the door of faith and the window of hope as wide open as thou canst, and, spreading the arms of thy imperfect love, say with all the ardour and resignation which thou art master of,—

“ My heart-strings groan with deep complaint,
My flesh lies panting, Lord, for thee ;
And every limb, and every joint,
Stretches for perfect purity.”

But if the Lord is pleased to come softly to thy help ; if he makes an end of thy corruptions by helping thee gently to sink to unknown depths of meekness ; if he drowns the indwelling man of sin by baptizing, by plunging him into an abyss of humility ; do not find fault with the simplicity of his method, the plainness of his appearing, and the commonness of his prescription. Nature, like Naaman, is full of prejudices. She expects that Christ will come to make her clean with as much ado, pomp, and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for when “ he was wroth, and said, Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.” Christ frequently goes a much plainer way to work ; and by this means he disconcerts all our preconceived notions and schemes of deliverance. “ ‘ Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul,’ the sweet rest of Christian perfection, of perfect humility, resignation, and meekness. Lie at my feet, as she did who loved much, and was meekly taken up ‘ with the good part,’ and ‘ the one thing needful.’ ” But thou frettest, thou despisest this robe of perfection, it is too plain for thee, thou slightest the “ ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price.” Nothing will serve thy turn but a tawdry coat of many colours, which may please thy proud self-will, and draw the attention of others, by its glorious and flaming appearance ; and it must be brought to thee with “ lightnings, thunderings, and voices.”

If this is thy disposition, wonder not at the divine wisdom which thinks fit to disappoint thy lofty prejudices; and let me address thee as Naaman's servants addressed him:—"My" brother, "if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he says to thee," "I am the meek and lowly Lamb of God," "wash" in the stream of my blood, plunge in the Jordan of my humility, "and be clean?" Instead therefore of going away from a plain Jesus in a rage, welcome him in his lowest appearance, and be persuaded that he can as easily make an end of thy sin by gently coming in a still, small voice, as by rushing in upon thee in a storm, a fire, or an earthquake. The Jews rejected their Saviour, not so much because they did not earnestly desire his coming, as because he did not come in the manner in which they expected him. It is probable that some of this Judaism cleaves to thee. If thou wilt absolutely come to mount Sion in a triumphal chariot, or make thine entrance into the new Jerusalem upon a prancing horse, thou art likely never to come there. Leave then all thy lordly misconceptions behind; and humbly follow thy king, who makes his entry into the typical Jerusalem, "meek and lowly, riding upon an ass," yea, "upon a colt, the foal of an ass." I say it again therefore, whilst thy faith and hope strongly insist on the blessing, let thy resignation and patience leave to God's infinite goodness and wisdom the peculiar manner of bestowing it. When he says, "Surely I come quickly" to "make my abode with thee," let thy faith close in with his word; ardently and yet meekly embrace his promise; it will instantly beget power, and with that power thou mayest instantly bring forth prayer, and possibly the prayer which opens heaven, humbly wrestles with God, inherits the blessing, and turns the well-known petition, "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus," into the well-known praises, "He is come! He is come! Praise the Lord, O my soul," &c. Thus repent, believe, and obey; and "he that cometh, will come" with a fulness of pure, meek, humble love: "He will not tarry;" or, if he tarries, it will be to give to thy faith and desires more time to open, that thou

mayest at his appearing be able to take in more of his perfecting grace and sanctifying power. Besides, thy expectation of his coming is of a purifying nature, and gradually sanctifies thee. "He that has this hope in him," by this very hope "purifies himself even as God is pure." For "we are saved" into perfect love "by hope," as well as "by faith." The "stalk" bears "the full corn in the ear," as well as the "root."

Up, then, thou sincere expectant of God's kingdom ; let thy humble, ardent, free will meet prevenient, sanctifying, free grace in its weakest and darkest appearance, as the father of the faithful met the Lord, when he "appeared to him in the plain of Mamre" as a mere mortal : "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked ; and, lo, three men stood by him : " so does free grace, if I may venture upon the allusion, invite itself to thy tent ; nay, it is now with thee in its creating, redeeming, and sanctifying influences. "And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground : " "Go and do likewise ; " if thou seest any beauty in the humbling "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," in the sanctifying "love of God," and in the comfortable "fellowship of the Holy Ghost," let thy free will "run to meet them, and bow itself toward the ground." O for a speedy going out of thy tent,—thy sinful self ! O for a race of desire in the way of faith ! O for incessant prostrations ! O for a meek and deep bowing of thyself before thy divine Deliverer ! "And Abraham said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." O for the humble pressing of a loving faith ! O for the faith which stopped the sun when God avenged his people in the days of Joshua ! O for the importunate faith of the two disciples who detained Christ when "he made as though he would have gone farther ! —They constrained him, saying, Abide with us ; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." He soon, indeed, "vanished out of their" bodily "sight," because they were not called always to enjoy his bodily presence. Far from promising them that blessing, he had said, "It is expedient for you

that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you, that he may abide with you for ever. He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." This promise is still "yea and amen in Christ:" only plead it according to the preceding directions; and as sure as our Lord is "the true and faithful Witness," so sure will "the God of hope" and love soon "fill you with all joy and peace, that ye may abound in" pure love, as well as in confirmed "hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Then shall you have an indisputable right to join the believers who sing at the Tabernacle, and at the Lock-chapel,—

" Many are we now, and one,
We who Jesus have put on :
There is neither bond nor free,
Male nor female, Lord, in thee.
Love, like death, hath all destroy'd,
Render'd all distinctions void ;
Names, and sects, and parties fall ;
Thou, O Christ, art all in all."

In the mean time, you may sing, with the pious countess of Huntingdon, the Rev. Mr. Madan, the Rev. Dr. Conyers, the Rev. Mr. Berridge, Richard Hill, esq., and the imperfectionists who use their collections of hymns ; ye may sing, I say, with them all, the two following hymns, which they have agreed to borrow from the hymns of Messrs. Wesley, after making some insignificant alterations. I transcribe them from the collection used in lady Huntingdon's chapels, Bristol edition, 1765, page 239.

" O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free,
A heart that's sprinkled with the blood
So freely spilt for me ;

" A heart resign'd, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone ;

" An humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean,
Which neither life nor death can part
From him that dwells within ;

"A heart in every thought renew'd,
And fill'd with love divine,
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine !" &c.

"My heart, thou know'st, can never rest
Till thou create my peace ;
Till, of mine Eden re-possess'd,
From self and sin I cease.

"Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart ;
Come quickly from above ;
Write thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of love."

Here is undoubtedly an evangelical prayer for the love which restores the soul to a state of sinless rest and evangelical perfection. Mean ye, my brethren, what the good people who dissent from us print and sing, and I ask no more. Nor can ye wait for an answer to the prayer contained in the preceding hymn in a more scriptural manner, than by pleading the "promise of the Father" in such words as these :—

"Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down ;
Fix in us thine humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown :
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art ;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

"Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast !
Let us all in thee inherit,
Let us find thy promised rest : *
Take away the power of sinning, †
Alpha and Omega be,
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

"Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive ;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave :

* Mr. Wesley says, "second rest," because an imperfect believer enjoys a first, inferior rest : if he did not, he would be no believer.

† Is not this expression too strong ? Would it not be better to soften it as Mr. Hill has done, by saying, "Take away the love of" (or the bent to) "sinning ?" Can God take away from us our "power of sinning," without taking away our power of free obedience ?

Thee we would be always blessing,
 Serve thee as thine hosts above ;
 Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
 Glory in thy precious love.*

“ Finish then thy new creation,
 Pure, unspotted † may we be ;
 Let us see thy great salvation,
 Perfectly restored by thee :
 Changed from glory into glory,
 Till in heaven we take our place ;
 Till we cast our crowns before thee,
 Lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

Lift up your hands which hang down ; our Aaron, our heavenly High Priest, is near to hold them up. The spiritual Amalekites will not always prevail ; our Samuel, our heavenly prophet, is ready to cut them and their “king in pieces before the Lord.” “The promise is unto you.” You are surely called to attain the perfection of your dispensation, although you seem still afar off. Christ, in whom that perfection centres ; Christ, from whom it flows, is very near, even at the door : “Behold,” says he, (and this he spake to Laodicean loiterers,) “I stand at the door, and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and open, I will come in, and sup with him,” upon the fruits of my grace in their Christian perfection ; “and he” shall sup “with me,” upon the fruits of my glory, in their angelical and heavenly maturity.

* Mr. Wesley says “perfect love,” with St. John.

† Mr. Wesley says, indeed, “pure and sinless ;” but when Mr. Hill sings “pure, unspotted,” he does not spoil the sense. For everybody knows, that the “pure, unspotted” Jesus does not differ from the sinless, immaculate Lamb of God. This fine hymn, I think, is not in Mr. Madan’s collection ; but he has probably sung it more than once. However, it is adopted in the Shrewsbury Collection, of which Mr. Hill is the publisher, in conjunction with Mr. De Courcy. Is it not surprising that, in his devotional warmth, that gentleman should print, give out, and sing Mr. Wesley’s strongest hymns for Christian perfection, when, in his controversial heat, he writes so severely against this blessed state of heart ? And may not I take my leave of him by an allusion to our Lord’s words : “Out of thy own mouth”—thy own pen, thy own publications, thy own hymns, thy own prayers, thy own bible, thy own reason, thy own conscience, and (what is most astonishing) thy own profession and baptismal vow—“I will judge” thy mistakes ? Nevertheless, I desire the reader to impute them, as I do, not to any love for indwelling sin, but to the fatal error which makes my pious opponent turn his back upon the genuine doctrines of grace and justice, and espouse the spurious doctrines of Calvinian grace and free wrath.

Hear this encouraging gospel : " Ask, and you shall have ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." " If any of you" believers " lack wisdom," (indwelling wisdom ; " Christ, the wisdom and the power of God, dwelling in his heart by faith,") " let him ask of God, who giveth to all men, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him. But let him ask" as a believer, " in faith, nothing wavering ; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed ; for let not that man think that he shall receive the thing which he" thus " asketh." But " whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." For " all things" commanded and promised " are possible to him that believeth." He who has commanded us to be " perfect" in love " as our heavenly Father is perfect," and he who has promised " speedily to avenge his elect, who cry to him night and day," he will speedily avenge you of your grand adversary, indwelling sin. He will say to you, " According to thy faith be it done unto thee ; for he is able to do far exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think ;" and " of his fulness" we may " all receive grace for grace ;" we may all witness the gracious fulfilment of all the promises which he has graciously made, " that by them we might be partakers of the divine nature," so far as it can be communicated to mortals in this world. You see that, with men, what you look for is impossible ; but show yourselves believers ; take God into the account, and you will soon experience, that " with God all things are possible." Nor forget the omnipotent Advocate whom you have with him. Behold, he lifts his once pierced hands, and says, " Father, sanctify them through thy" loving " truth, that they may be perfected in one ;" and, showing to you the fountain of atoning blood, and purifying water, whence flow the streams which cleanse and gladden the heart of believers, he says, " Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name ; whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." " Ask," then, " that

your joy may be full." If I try your faith by a little delay, if I hide my face for a moment, it is only to gather you with everlasting kindness. "A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy. Now ye have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. In that day ye shall ask me no question," for you shall not have my bodily presence; but my Urim and Thummim will be with you; and "the Spirit of truth will himself lead you into all" Christian "truth."

"O for a firm and lasting faith,
To credit all the Almighty saith,
To' embrace the promise of his Son,
And feel the Comforter our own."

In the mean time, be not afraid to "give glory to God" by "believing in hope against hope. Stagger not at the promise" of the Father and the Son, "through unbelief;" but trust the power and faithfulness of your Creator and Redeemer, till your Sanctifier has fixed his abode in your heart. Wait at mercy's door, as the lame beggar did at the "beautiful gate of the temple. Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us; and he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something of them." Do so too; give heed to the Father in the Son, who says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." Expect to receive the "one thing" now "needful" for you,—a fulness of the sanctifying Spirit; and though your patience may be tried, it shall not be disappointed. The faith and power which, at Peter's word, gave the poor cripple a perfect soundness in the presence of all the wondering Jews will give you, at Christ's word, a perfect soundness of heart, in the presence of all your adversaries.

"Faith, mighty faith the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done.

"Faith asks impossibilities;
Impossibilities are given:
And I, even I, from sin shall cease,
Shall live on earth the life of heaven."

“Faith” always “works by love,” by love of desire, at least, making us ardently pray for what we believe to be eminently desirable. And if Christian perfection appears so to you, you might, perhaps, express your earnest desire of it in some such words as these :—“How long, Lord, shall my soul, thy spiritual temple, be a den of thieves, or an house of merchandise? How long shall vain thoughts profane it, as the buyers and sellers profaned thy temple made with human hands? How long shall evil tempers lodge within me? How long shall unbelief, formality, hypocrisy, envy, hankering after sensual pleasure, indifference to spiritual delights, and backwardness to painful or ignominious duty, harbour there? How long shall these sheep and doves, yea, these goats and serpents, defile my breast, which should be pure as the holy of holies? how long shall they hinder me from being one of the worshippers whom thou seekest,—one of those who worship thee in spirit and in truth? O help me to take away these cages of unclean birds! ‘Suddenly come to thy temple.’ Turn out all that offends the eye of thy purity; and destroy all that keeps me out of ‘the rest which remains for thy’ Christian ‘people;’ so shall I keep a spiritual sabbath, a Christian jubilee to the God of my life; so shall I witness my share in the oil of joy with which thou anointest perfect Christians above their fellow-believers. I stand in need of that oil, Lord: my lamp burns dim; sometimes it seems to be even gone out, as that of the foolish virgins: it is more like a ‘smoking flax,’ than a ‘burning and shining light.’ O quench it not; raise it to a flame. Thou knowest that I do believe in thee. The trembling hand of my faith holds thee; and though I have ten thousand times grieved thy pardoning love, thine everlasting arm is still under me, to redeem my life from destruction; while thy right hand is over me, to crown me with mercies and lovingkindness. But, alas! I am neither sufficiently thankful for thy present mercies, nor sufficiently athirst for thy future favours; hence I feel an aching void in my soul, being conscious that I have not attained the heights of grace described in thy word, and enjoyed by thy holiest ser-

vants. Their deep experiences, the diligence and ardour with which they did thy will, the patience and fortitude with which they endured the cross, reproach me, and convince me of my manifold wants. I want power from on high; I want the penetrating, lasting unction of the holy One; I want to have my vessel—my capacious heart—full of the ‘oil which makes the countenance’ of wise virgins ‘cheerful;’ I want a lamp of heavenly illumination, and a fire of divine love, burning day and night in my breast, as the typical lamps did in the temple, and the sacred fire on the altar; I want a full application of ‘the blood which cleanses from all sin,’ and a strong faith in thy sanctifying word, a faith by which thou mayest dwell in my heart, as the unwavering hope of glory, and the fixed object of my love: I want the internal oracle,—thy ‘still, small voice,’—together with Urim and Thummim,*—‘the new name which none knoweth but he that receiveth it:’ in a word, Lord, I want a plenitude of thy Spirit, the full promise of the Father, and the rivers which flow from the inmost soul of the believers who have gone on to the perfection of thy dispensation. I do believe that thou canst and wilt thus ‘baptize me with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.’ Help my unbelief; confirm and increase my faith, with regard to this important baptism. ‘Lord, I have need to be’ thus ‘baptized of thee,’ and ‘I am straitened till this baptism is accomplished.’ By thy baptisms of tears in the manger, of water in Jordan, of sweat in Gethsemane, ‘of blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke,’ and flaming wrath on Calvary, baptize, O baptize my soul, and make as full an end of the original sin which I have from Adam, as thy last baptism made of the ‘likeness of sinful flesh’ which thou hadst from a daughter of Eve. Some of thy people look at death for full salvation from sin; but at thy command, Lord, I look unto thee. Say to my soul, ‘I am thy salvation;’ and let me feel in my heart, as well as see with my understanding, that thou canst ‘save’ from sin ‘to the uttermost all that come to God through thee.’ I am tired of forms, professions, and orthodox notions, so far as

* Two Hebrew words which mean “lights” and “perfections.”

they are not pipes or channels to convey life, light, and love to my dead, dark, and stony heart. Neither the plain letter of thy gospel, nor the sweet foretastes and transient illuminations of thy Spirit, can satisfy the large desires of my faith. Give me thine abiding Spirit, that he may continually shed abroad thy love in my soul. Come, O Lord, with that blessed Spirit; come, thou and thy Father, in that holy Comforter; come to make your abode with me; or I shall go meekly mourning to my grave. Blessed mourning! Lord, increase it. I had rather wait in tears for thy fulness, than wantonly waste the fragments of thy spiritual bounties, or feed with Laodicean contentment upon the tainted manna of my former experiences. Righteous Father, I hunger and thirst after thy righteousness: send thy Holy Spirit of promise, to fill me therewith, to sanctify me throughout, and to seal me centrally to the day of eternal redemption, and finished salvation. 'Not for works of righteousness which I have done, but of thy mercy; for Christ's sake, 'save thou me by the' complete 'washing of regeneration, and the' full 'renewing of the Holy Ghost;' and in order to this, pour out of thy Spirit, shed it abundantly on me, till the fountain of living water abundantly springs up in my soul, and I can say, in the full sense of the words, that 'thou livest in me,' that 'my life is hid with thee in God,' and that 'my spirit is returned to him that gave it,—to thee, the first and the last, my author and my end, my God and my all."

SECTION XX.

YE have not sung the preceding hymns in vain, O ye men of God, who have mixed faith with your evangelical requests. The God who says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;"—the gracious God who declares, "Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled;"—that faithful, covenant-keeping God has now "filled you with all righteousness, peace, and joy

in believing." The brightness of Christ's appearing has destroyed the indwelling man of sin. He who had slain the lion and the bear, he who had already done so great things for you, has now crowned all his blessings by slaying the Goliath within. Aspiring, unbelieving self is fallen before the victorious Son of David. The "quick and powerful word of God," which is "sharper than any two-edged sword," has "pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." The carnal mind is cut off; "the circumcision of the heart, through the Spirit," has fully taken place in your breasts; and now "that mind is in you which was also in Christ Jesus;" ye are spiritually-minded; loving God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourselves, ye are full of goodness, ye keep the commandments, ye observe "the law of liberty," ye "fulfil the law of Christ. Of him" ye have "learned to be meek and lowly in heart." Ye have fully "taken his yoke upon you;" in so doing, ye have "found" a sweet, abiding "rest unto your souls;" and from blessed experience ye can say, "Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light;" his "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace;" "all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." The beatitudes are sensibly yours; and the charity described by St. Paul has the same place in your breasts which the tables of the law had in the ark of the covenant. Ye are the living temples of the Trinity; the Father is your life, the Son your light, the Spirit your love; ye are truly baptized into the mystery of God, ye continue to "drink into one Spirit," and thus ye enjoy the grace of both sacraments. There is an end of your "lo, here!" and "lo, there!" "The kingdom of God is" now established "within you." Christ's "righteousness, peace, and joy" are rooted in your breasts "by the Holy Ghost given unto you," as an abiding guide and indwelling comforter. Your introverted eye of faith looks at God, who gently "guides you with his eye into all the truth" necessary to make you "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." Simplicity of intention keeps darkness out of your mind, and purity of affec-

tion keeps wrong fires out of your breast. By the former ye are without guile ; by the latter ye are without envy. Your passive will instantly melts into the will of God ; and on all occasions you meekly say, "Not my will, O Father, but thine be done ;" thus are ye always ready to suffer what you are called to suffer. Your active will evermore says, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth : what wouldest thou have me to do ? It is my meat and drink to do the will of my heavenly Father ;" thus are ye always ready to do whatsoever ye are convinced that God calls you to do ; and "whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat, or drink, or do any thing else, ye do all to the glory of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ; rejoicing evermore ; praying without ceasing ; in every thing giving thanks ;" solemnly "looking for, and hasting unto," the hour of your dissolution, and "the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved," and your soul, being clothed with a celestial body, shall be able to do celestial services to the God of your life.

In this blessed state of Christian perfection, the holy "anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, unless it be as the same anointing teacheth." Agreeably, therefore, to that anointing, which teaches by a variety of means, which formerly taught a prophet by an ass, and daily instructs God's children by the ant, I shall venture to set before you some important directions, which the Holy Ghost has already suggested to your pure minds : for "I would not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet to stir you up by putting you in remembrance," and giving you some hints, which it is safe for you frequently to meditate upon.

I. Adam, ye know, lost his human perfection in paradise ; satan lost his angelic perfection in heaven ; the devil thrust sore at Christ in the wilderness, to throw him down from his mediatorial perfection ; and St. Paul, in the same epistles where he professes not only Christian,

but apostolic perfection also, (Phil. iii. 15 ; 1 Cor. ii. 6 ; 2 Cor. xii. 11,) informs us, that he continued to "run for the crown of heavenly" perfection like a man who might not only lose his crown of Christian perfection, but become a reprobate, and be cast away, 1 Cor. ix. 25—27. And therefore so run ye also, "that no man take your crown" of Christian perfection in this world, and "that ye may obtain" your crown of angelic perfection in the world to come. Still keep your body under. Still guard your senses. Still watch your own heart ; and, "steadfast in the faith," still "resist the devil," that he may "flee from you ;" remembering, that if Christ himself, as Son of man, had "conferred with flesh and blood," refused to deny himself, and avoided taking up his cross, he had lost his perfection, and sealed up our original apostasy.

"We do not find," says Mr. Wesley, in his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, "any general state described in scripture from which a man cannot draw back to sin. If there were any state wherein this was impossible, it would be that of those who are sanctified, who are fathers in Christ, who 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.' But it is not impossible for these to draw back. They who are sanctified may yet fall and perish. Heb. x. 29. Even fathers in Christ need that warning, 'Love not the world.' 1 John ii. 15. They who 'rejoice, pray, and give thanks without ceasing,' may, nevertheless, 'quench the Spirit.' 1 Thess. v. 16, &c. Nay, even they who are 'sealed unto the day of redemption,' may yet 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God.' Eph. iv. 30." *

* We do not hereby deny, that some believers have a testimony in their own breast, that they shall not finally fall from God. "They may have it," says Mr. Wesley in the same tract, "and this persuasion, that neither life nor death shall separate them from God, far from being hurtful, may, in some circumstances, be extremely useful." But wherever this testimony is divine, it is attended with that grace which inseparably connects holiness and good works, the means, with perseverance and eternal salvation, the end ; and, in this respect, our doctrine widely differs from that of the Calvinists, who break the necessary connexion between holiness and infallible salvation, by making room for the foulest falls,—for adultery, murder, and incest.

The doctrine of the absolute perseverance of the saints is the first card which the devil played against man : “ ‘ Ye shall not surely die,’ if ye break the law of your perfection.” This fatal card won the game. Mankind and paradise were lost. The artful serpent had too well succeeded at his first game, to forget that lucky card at his second. See him “transforming himself into an angel of light” on the pinnacle of the temple. There he plays over again his old game against the Son of God. Out of the bible he pulls the very card which won our first parents, and swept the stake—paradise ; yea, swept it with the besom of destruction. “Cast thyself down,” says he ; “for it is written,” that all things shall work together for thy good, thy very falls not excepted : “He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” The tempter, thanks be to Christ, lost the game at that time ; but he did not lose his card ; and it is probable that he will play it round against you all, only with some variation. Let me mention one among a thousand. He promised our Lord that God’s angels should bear him up in their hands, if he threw himself down ; and it is not unlikely that he will promise you greater things still. Nor should I wonder if he was bold enough to hint, that, when you cast yourselves down, God himself shall bear you up in his hands, yea, in his arms of everlasting love. O ye men of God, learn wisdom by the fall of Adam. O ye anointed sons of the Most High, learn watchfulness by the conduct of Christ. If he was afraid to “tempt the Lord his God,” will ye dare to do it ? If he rejected as poison, the hook of the absolute perseverance of the saints, though it was baited with scripture, will ye swallow it down, as if it were “honey out of the rock of ages ?” No : “through faith in Christ the scriptures have made you wise unto salvation ;” you will not only fly with all speed from evil, but from the very appearance of evil. And when you stand on the brink of a temptation, far from entering into it, under any pretence whatever, ye will leap back into the bosom of Him who says, “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into

temptation; for” though “the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.” I grant that, evangelically speaking, the weakness of the flesh is not sin; but yet the “deceitfulness of sin” creeps in at this door; and by this means not a few of God’s children, “after they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the” sanctifying “knowledge of Christ,” under plausible pretences, “have been again entangled therein and overcome.” Let their falls make you cautious. Ye have put on the whole armour of God: O keep it on, and use it “with all prayer,” that ye may, to the last, “stand complete in Christ,” and be “more than conquerors” through him that has loved you.

II. Remember that “every one who is perfect shall be as his Master.” Now if your Master was tempted and assaulted to the last; if to the last he watched and prayed, using all the means of grace himself, and enforcing the use of them upon others; if to the last he fought against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and did not “put off the harness” till he had put off the body; think not yourselves above him, but “go and do likewise.” If he did not regain paradise, without going through the most complete renunciation of all the good things of this world, and without meekly submitting to the severe stroke of his last enemy, death; be content to be “perfect as he was;” nor fancy that your flesh and blood can inherit the celestial kingdom of God, when the flesh and blood which Emmanuel himself assumed from a pure virgin could not inherit it without passing under the cherub’s flaming sword; I mean, without going through the gates of death.

III. Ye are not complete in wisdom. Perfect love does not imply perfect knowledge; but perfect humility, and perfect readiness to receive instruction. Remember therefore, that if ever ye show that ye are above being instructed, even by a fisherman who teaches according to the divine anointing, ye will show that ye are fallen from a perfection of humility into a perfection of pride.

IV. Do not confound angelical with Christian perfection. Uninterrupted transports of praise, and ceaseless raptures of joy, do not belong to Christian, but to an-

gelical perfection. Our feeble frame can bear but a few drops of that glorious cup. In general, that "new wine" is too strong for our "old bottles;" that power is too excellent for our earthen cracked vessels; but, weak as they are, they can bear a fulness of meekness, of resignation, of humility, and of that love which is willing to obey unto death. If God indulges you with ecstasies and extraordinary revelations, be thankful for them, but be "not exalted above measure by them;" take care lest enthusiastic delusions mix themselves with them; and remember, that your Christian perfection does not so much consist in "building a tabernacle" upon mount Tabor, to rest and enjoy rare sights there, as in resolutely taking up the cross, and following Christ to the palace of a proud Caiaphas, to the judgment-hall of an unjust Pilate, and to the top of an ignominious Calvary. Ye never read in your bibles, "Let that glory be upon you, which was also upon St. Stephen, when 'he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.'" But ye have frequently read there, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

See him on that ignominious gibbet: he hangs, abandoned by his friends, surrounded by his foes, condemned by the rich, insulted by the poor. He hangs, a worm, and no man! a very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people! "All they that see him laugh him to scorn. They shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him." "There is none to help him." One of his apostles denies, another sells him, and the rest run away. "Many oxen are come about him; fat bulls of Bashan close him on every side; they gape upon him with their mouths, as it were a ramping lion. He is poured out like water, his heart in the midst of his body is like melting wax; his

strength is dried up like a potsherd ; his tongue cleaveth to his gums ; he is going into the dust of death. Many dogs are come about him, and the counsel of the wicked layeth siege against him. His hands and feet are pierced. You may tell all his bones. They stand staring and looking upon him. They part his garments among them, and cast lots" for the only remain of his property, his plain, seamless vesture. Both suns, the visible and the invisible, seem eclipsed. No cheering beam of created light gilds his gloomy prospect. No smile of his heavenly Father supports his agonizing soul. No cordial, unless it be vinegar and gall, revives his sinking spirits. He has nothing left, except his God. But his God is enough for him. In his God he has all things. And though his soul is "seized with sorrow, even unto death," yet it hangs more firmly upon his God by a naked faith, than his lacerated body does on the cross by the clinched nails. The perfection of his love shines in all its Christian glory. He not only forgives his insulting foes and bloody persecutors, but in the highest point of his passion he forgets his own wants, and thirsts after their eternal happiness. Together with his blood, he pours out his soul for them ; and excusing them all, he says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." O ye adult sons of God, "in" this "glass behold all with open face the glory" of your Redeemer's forgiving, praying love ; and, as ye behold it, "be changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the loving Spirit of the Lord."

V. This lesson is deep ; but he may teach you one deeper still : by a strong sympathy with Him in all his sufferings, he may call you to know him every way crucified. Stern justice thunders from heaven, "Awake, O sword, against the man who is my fellow !" The sword awakes, the sword goes through his soul, the flaming sword is quenched in his blood. But is one sinew of his perfect faith cut, one fibre of his perfect resignation injured, by the astonishing blow ? No : his God slays him, and yet he trusts in his God. By the noblest of all ventures, in the most dreadful of all storms, he meekly bows his head, and shelters his departing soul in the

bosom of his God: "My God! my God!" says he, "though all thy comforts have forsaken me, and all thy storms and waves go over me, yet into thy hands I commend my spirit." "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand," where I shall soon sit, "there are pleasures for evermore." What a pattern of perfect confidence! O ye perfect Christians, be ambitious to ascend to those amazing heights of Christ's perfection: "for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who knew no sin; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." If this is your high calling on earth, rest not, O ye fathers in Christ, till your patient hope and perfect confidence in God have got their last victory over your last enemy,—the king of terrors.

"The ground of a thousand mistakes," says Mr. Wesley, "is, the not considering deeply, that love is the highest gift of God, humble, gentle, patient love; that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love. It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this: the heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion: there is, in effect, nothing else. If you look for any thing but more love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, 'Have you received this or that blessing?' if you mean any thing but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it, then, in your heart, that, from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing but more of that love described in 1 Cor. xiii. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham's bosom."

VI. Love is humble: "Be therefore clothed with humility," says Mr. Wesley; "let it not only fill but cover you all over. Let modesty and self-diffidence

appear in all your words and actions. Let all you speak and do show that you are little, and base, and mean, and vile in your own eyes. As one instance of this, be always ready to own any fault you have been in: if you have at any time thought, spoke, or acted wrong, be not backward to acknowledge it; never dream that this will hurt the cause of God: no; it will further it. Be therefore open and frank, when you are taxed with any thing: let it appear just as it is; and you will thereby not hinder, but adorn, the gospel." Why should ye be more backward in acknowledging your failings, than in confessing that ye do not pretend to infallibility? St. Paul was perfect in the love which casts out fear, and therefore he boldly reprov'd the high priest. But when he had reprov'd him more sharply than the fifth commandment allows, he directly confessed his mistake, and set his seal to the importance of the duty in which he had been inadvertently wanting: "Then Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." St. John was perfect in the courteous, humble love which brings us down at the feet of all. His courtesy, his humility, and the dazzling glory which beamed forth from a divine messenger, whom he apprehended to be more than a creature, betrayed him into a fault contrary to that of St. Paul; but, far from concealing it, he openly confessed it, and published his confession for the edification of all the churches. "When I had heard and seen," says he, "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant." Christian perfection shines as much in the child-like simplicity with which the perfect readily acknowledge their faults, as it does in the manly steadiness with which they "resist unto blood, striving against sin."

VII. If humble love makes us frankly confess our faults, much more does it incline us to own ourselves sinners, miserable sinners before that God whom we have so frequently offended. I need not remind you, that your "bodies are dead because of sin;" you see, you feel it:

and therefore, so long as you dwell in a prison of flesh and blood, which death, the revenger of sin, is to pull down ; so long as your final justification, as pardoned and sanctified sinners, has not taken place ; yea, so long as you break the law of paradisiacal perfection, under which you were originally placed ; it is meet, right, and your bounden duty to consider yourselves as sinners, who, as transgressors of the law of innocence, and the law of liberty, are guilty of death, of eternal death. St. Paul did so, after he was "come to mount Sion, and to the spirits of just men made perfect ;" he still looked upon himself as the "chief of sinners," because he had been a daring blasphemer of Christ, and a fierce persecutor of his people : "Christ," says he, "came to save sinners, of whom I am chief." The reason is plain. Matter of fact is and will be matter of fact to all eternity. According to the doctrines of grace and justice, and before the throne of God's mercy and holiness, a sinner pardoned and sanctified must, in the very nature of things, be considered as a sinner ; for if you consider him as a saint, absolutely abstracted from the character of a sinner, how can he be a pardoned and sanctified sinner ? To all eternity, therefore, but much more while "death, the wages of sin," is at your heels, and while ye are going to "appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," to receive your final sentence of absolution or condemnation, it will become you to say with St. Paul, "We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely," as sinners, "by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ ;"—although we are justified judicially ; as believers, through faith ; as obedient believers, through the obedience of faith ; and as perfect Christians, through Christian perfection.

VIII. Humble love "becomes all things," but sin, "to all men," although it delights most in those who are most holy. Ye may and ought to set your love of peculiar complacence upon God's dearest children, upon those who, like yourselves, excel in virtue ; because they more strongly reflect the image of the God of love, the holy One of Israel. But if ye despise the weak, and are above

lending them a helping hand, ye are fallen from Christian perfection, which teaches us to "bear one another's burdens," especially the burdens of the weak. Imitate, then, the tenderness and wisdom of the good Shepherd, who "carries the lambs in his bosom, gently leads the sheep which are big with young," feeds with milk those who cannot bear strong meat, and says to his imperfect disciples, "I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now."

IX. "Where the loving Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" keep therefore at the utmost distance from the shackles of a narrow, prejudiced, bigoted spirit. The moment ye confine your love to the people who think just as you do, and your regard to the preachers who exactly suit your taste, you fall from perfection, and turn bigots. "I entreat you," says, Mr. Wesley, in his Plain Account, "beware of bigotry. Let not your love or beneficence be confined to Methodists (so called) only; much less to that very small part of them who seem to be renewed in love, or to those who believe yours and their report. O make not this your 'shibboleth.'" On the contrary, as ye have time and ability, "do good to all men." Let your benevolence shine upon all; let your charity send its cherishing beams towards all, in proper degrees; so shall ye be "perfect as your heavenly Father," who "makes his sun to shine upon all," although he sends the brightest and warmest beams of his favour upon the household of faith, and reserves his richest bounties for those who lay out their five talents to the best advantage.

X. Love, pure love, is satisfied with the supreme Good,—with God. "Beware, then, of desiring any thing but him. Now you desire nothing else: every other desire is driven out; see that none enter in again. Keep thyself pure: let 'your eye remain single, and your whole body shall be full of light.' Admit no desire of pleasing food, or any other pleasure of sense; no desire of pleasing the eye, or the imagination; no desire of money, of praise, or esteem; of happiness in any creature. You may bring these desires back, but you need not: you may feel them no more. O 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ

hath made you free.' Be patterns to all of denying yourselves, and taking up your cross daily. Let them see that you make no account of any pleasure which does not bring you nearer to God, nor regard any pain which does; that you simply aim at pleasing him, whether by doing or suffering; that the constant language of your heart, with regard to pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour, riches or poverty, is,

'All is alike to me, so I
In my Lord may live and die.' "

XI. The best soldiers are sent upon the most difficult and dangerous expeditions; and as you are the best soldiers of Jesus Christ, ye will probably be called to drink deepest of his cup, and to carry the heaviest burdens. "Expect contradiction and opposition," says the judicious divine whom I have just quoted, "together with crosses of various kinds. Consider the words of St. Paul: 'To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, for his sake, as a fruit of his death and intercession for you, 'not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake.' Philip. i. 29. 'It is given'—God gives you this opposition or reproach; it is a fresh token of his love. And will you disown the giver? or spurn his gift, and count it a misfortune? Will you not rather say, 'Father, the hour is come, that thou shouldest be glorified. Now thou givest thy child to suffer something for thee. Do with me according to thy will.' Know that these things, far from being hinderances to the work of God, or to your soul, unless by your own fault, are not only unavoidable in the course of providence, but profitable, yea, necessary, for you; therefore, receive them from God, not from chance, with willingness, with thankfulness; receive them from men with humility, meekness, yieldingness, gentleness, sweetness."

Love can never do nor suffer too much for its divine object. Be then ambitious, like St. Paul, to be made perfect in sufferings. I have already observed, that the apostle, not satisfied to be a perfect Christian, would also be a perfect martyr, earnestly desiring to "know the fellowship of Christ's" utmost "sufferings." Follow him, as he followed his suffering, crucified Lord. "Your feet are shod

with the preparation of the gospel of peace :” run after them both in the race of obedience, for the crown of martyrdom, if that crown is reserved for you. And if ye miss the crown of those who are martyrs in deed, ye shall, however, receive the reward of those who are martyrs in intention,—the crown of righteousness and angelical perfection.

XII. But do not so desire to follow Christ to the garden of Gethsemane, as to refuse following him now to the carpenter’s shop, if Providence now calls you to it. Do not lose the present day by idly looking back at yesterday, or foolishly ante-dating the cares of to-morrow ; but wisely use every hour, spending them as one who stands on the verge of time, on the border of eternity, and who has his work cut out by a wise Providence from moment to moment. Never, therefore, neglect using the two talents you have now, and doing the duty which is now incumbent upon you. Should ye be tempted to it, under the plausible pretence of waiting for a greater number of talents, remember that God doubles our talents in the way of duty, and that it is a maxim advanced by Elisha Coles himself, “ Use grace, and have ” more “ grace.” Therefore, “ to continual watchfulness and prayer, add continual employment,” says Mr. Wesley ; “ for grace flies a vacuum, as well as nature ; the devil fills whatever God does not fill.” “ As ‘ by works faith is made perfect,’ so the completing or destroying the work of faith, and enjoying the favour or suffering the displeasure of God, greatly depends on every single act of obedience.” If you forget this, you will hardly do now whatsoever your hand findeth to do. Much less will you do it with all your might for God, for eternity.

XIII. Love is modest ; it rather inclines to bashfulness and silence, than to talkative forwardness. “ In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin : ” “ be,” therefore, “ slow to speak ; ” “ nor cast your pearls before ” those who cannot distinguish them from pebbles. Nevertheless, when you are solemnly called upon to bear testimony to the truth, and to say what great things God has done for you, it would be cowardice, or false prudence, not to do it

with humility. "Be," then, "always ready to give an answer to every man who" properly "asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness," without fluttering anxiety, "and with fear," with a reverential awe of God upon your minds. 1 Peter iii. 15. The perfect are "burning and shining lights;" and our Lord intimates, that, as "a candle is not lighted to be put under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all the house;" so God does not light the candle of perfect love to hide it in a corner, but to give light to all those who are within the reach of its brightness. If diamonds glitter, if stars shine, if flowers display their colours, and perfumes diffuse their fragrance, to the honour of the Father of lights, and Author of every good gift, if, without self-seeking, they disclose his glory to the utmost of their power, why should ye not "go and do likewise?" Gold answers its most valuable end, when it is brought to light, and made to circulate for charitable and pious uses; and not when it lies concealed in a miser's strong box, or in the dark bosom of a mine. But when you lay out your spiritual gold for proper uses, beware of imitating the vanity of those coxcombs who, as often as they are about to pay for a trifle, pull out a handful of gold, merely to make a show of their wealth.

XIV Love, or "charity, rejoiceth in the" display of an edifying "truth. Fact is fact all the world over. If you can say to the glory of God, that you are alive, and feel very well, when you do so, why could you not also testify to his honour, that you live not, but that Christ liveth in you, if you really find that this is your experience? Did not St. John say, "Our love is made perfect, because, as he is, so are we in this world?" Did not St. Paul write, "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk after the Spirit?" Did he not with the same simplicity aver, that, although he "had nothing," and was "sorrowful," yet he "possessed all things," and was "always rejoicing?"

Hence it appears, that, with respect to the declaring or concealing what God has done for your soul, the line of your duty runs exactly between the proud forwardness of

some stiff pharisees, and the voluntary humility of some stiff mystics. The former vainly boast of more than they experience ; and by that means they set up the cursed idol, self : the latter ungratefully hide the wonderful works of God, which the primitive Christians spoke of publicly in a variety of languages ; and by this means they refuse to exalt their gracious benefactor, Christ. The first error is undoubtedly more odious than the second ; but what need is there of leaning to either ? Would ye avoid them both ? Let your tempers and lives always declare, that perfect love is attainable in this life ; and when you have a proper call to declare it with your lips and pens, do it without forwardness to the glory of God ; do it with simplicity, for the edification of your neighbour ; do it with godly jealousy, lest ye should show the treasures of divine grace in your hearts, with the same self-complacency with which king Hezekiah showed his treasures, and the golden vessels of the temple, to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, remembering what a dreadful curse this piece of vanity pulled down upon him : “And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord : Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried into Babylon ; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.” If God so severely punished Hezekiah’s pride, how properly does St. Peter charge believers to give with fear an account of the grace which is in them ! and how careful should ye be to observe this important charge !

XV If you will keep at the utmost distance from the vanity which proved so fatal to good king Hezekiah, follow an excellent direction of Mr. Wesley. When you have done anything for God, or “received any favour from him, retire, if not into your closet, into your heart, and say, ‘I come, Lord, to restore to thee what thou hast given, and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness. For what is the most perfect creature in heaven or earth in thy presence, but a void, capable of being filled with thee and by thee, as the air which is void and dark, is capable of being filled with the light of the sun ? Grant therefore, O Lord, that I may never appropriate thy grace to myself, any more than the air appropriates to

itself the light of the sun, who withdraws it every day to restore it the next; there being nothing in the air that either appropriates his light or resists it. O give me the same facility of receiving and restoring thy grace and good works! I say, thine; for I acknowledge that the root from which they spring is in thee, and not in me.' The true means to be filled anew with the riches of grace, is thus to strip ourselves of it: without this it is extremely difficult not to faint in the practice of good works." "And therefore, that your good works may receive their last perfection, let them lose themselves in God. This is a kind of death to them, resembling that of our bodies, which will not attain their highest life, their immortality, till they lose themselves in the glory of our souls, or rather of God, wherewith they shall be filled. And it is only what they had of earthly and mortal which good works lose by this spiritual death."

XVI. Would ye see this deep precept put in practice? Consider St. Paul. Already possessed of Christian perfection, he does good works from morning till night. He "warns every one night and day with tears." He carries the gospel from east to west. Wherever he stops, he plants a church at the hazard of his life. But instead of resting in his present perfection, and in the good works which spring from it, "he grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;" unweariedly "following after, if that he may apprehend that" perfection "for which also he is apprehended of Christ Jesus," that celestial perfection of which he got lively ideas when he was "caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." With what amazing ardour does he run his race of Christian perfection for the prize of that higher perfection! How does he forget the works of yesterday, when he lays himself out for God to-day! "Though dead, he yet speaketh;" nor can an address to perfect Christians be closed by a more proper speech than his. "Brethren," says he, "be followers of me." "I count not myself to have apprehended my angelical perfection; "but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind,"

settling in none of my former experiences, resting in none of my good works, "and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the" celestial "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded ; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." In the meantime you may sing the following hymn of the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley, which is descriptive of the destruction of corrupt self-will, and expressive of the absolute resignation which characterizes a perfect believer :—

" To do, or not to do ; to have,
 Or not to have, I leave to Thee :
 To be, or not to be I leave :
 Thy only will be done in me.
 All my requests are lost in one :
 Father, thy only will be done.

" Suffice that, for the season past,
 Myself in things divine I sought,
 For comforts cried with eager haste,
 And murmur'd that I found them not.
 I leave it now to thee alone :
 Father, thy only will be done.

" Thy gifts I clamour for no more,
 Or selfishly thy grace require,
 An evil heart to varnish o'er ;
 Jesus, the Giver, I desire ;
 After the flesh no longer known :
 Father, thy only will be done.

" Welcome alike the crown or cross ;
 Trouble I cannot ask, nor peace,
 Nor toil, nor rest, nor gain, nor loss,
 Nor joy, nor grief, nor pain, nor ease,
 Nor life, nor death ; but ever groan,
 Father, thy only will be done."

This hymn suits all the believers who are at the bottom of mount Sion, and begin to join the spirits of just men made perfect. But when the triumphal chariot of perfect love gloriously carries you to the top of perfection's hill ; when you are raised far above the common heights of the perfect ; when you are almost translated into glory like Elijah, then you may sing another hymn of the same Christian poet, with the Rev. Mr. Madan, and the numerous body of imperfectionists who use his collection of Psalms, &c.

“ Who in Jesus confide,
 They are bold to outride
 The storms of affliction beneath :
 With the prophet they soar
 To that heavenly shore,
 And outfly all the arrows of death.

“ By faith we are come
 To our permanent home ;
 By hope we the rapture improve :
 By love we still rise,
 And look down on the skies ;
 For the heaven of heavens is love !

“ Who on earth can conceive
 How happy we live
 In the city of God the great King !
 What a concert of praise,
 When our Jesus's grace
 The whole heavenly company sing !

“ What a rapturous song,
 When the glorified throng
 In the spirit of harmony join !
 Join all the glad choirs,
 Hearts, voices, and lyres,
 And the burden is mercy divine ! ”

But when you cannot follow Mr. Madan, and the imperfectionists of the Lock chapel, to those rapturous heights of perfection, you need not give up your shield. You may still rank among the perfect, if you can heartily join in this version of Psalm cxxxi. :—

“ Lord, thou dost the grace impart,
 Poor in spirit, meek in heart,
 I will as my Master be,
 Rooted in humility.

“ Now, dear Lord, that thee I know,
 Nothing will I seek below,
 Aim at nothing great or high,
 Lowly both in heart and eye.

“ Simple, teachable, and mild,
 Awed into a little child,
 Quiet now without my food,
 Wean'd from every creature good,

“ Hangs my new-born soul on thee,
 Kept from all idolatry ;
 Nothing wants beneath, above,
 Resting in thy perfect love.”

That your earthen vessels may be filled with this love till they break, and you enjoy the divine object of your

faith without an interposing veil of gross flesh and blood,
is the wish of one who sincerely praises God on your
account, and ardently prays,—

“ Make up thy jewels, Lord, and show
The glorious, spotless church below ;
The fellowship of saints make known ;
And O, my God, might I be one !

“ O might my lot be cast with these,
The least of Jesu’s witnesses !
O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples’ feet !

“ To wait upon his saints below,
On gospel errands for them go ;
Enjoy the grace to angels given ;
And serve the royal heirs of heaven.”

THE
PORTRAIT OF ST. PAUL:
OR,
THE TRUE MODEL
FOR
CHRISTIANS AND PASTORS.

TRANSLATED FROM A FRENCH MANUSCRIPT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN WILLIAM DE LA FLECHERE,

VICAR OF MADELEY.

BY THE REV JOSHUA GILPIN,

VICAR OF ROCKWARDINE, IN THE COUNTY OF SALOP.

“ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”
1 COR. xi. 1.

TO
JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.,
OF BRISLINGTON, NEAR BRISTOL,
THE FOLLOWING WORK
Is respectfully addressed,
AS A MONUMENT
OF THE LONG AND INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP
WHICH SUBSISTED BETWEEN HIM AND THE AUTHOR,
AND AS A PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF THE VERY LIBERAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT
WITH WHICH HE HAS FAVOURED
HIS TRULY OBLIGED
AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,
THE TRANSLATOR.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following work was begun, and nearly completed, in the course of M. de la Flechere's last residence at Nyon, where it formed a valuable part of his private labours during a long and painful confinement from public duty. On his return to England, he suffered the manuscript to lie by him in a very loose and disordered state, intending, at his leisure, to translate and prepare it for the press. In the mean time he entered upon the arduous task of revising and enlarging a French poem which he had lately published at Geneva, under the title of *La Louange*, and which was reprinted at London in the year 1785, under the title of *La Grâce et la Nature*. The second appearance of this poem was speedily followed by the dissolution of the author. Soon after this melancholy event had taken place, Mrs. de la Flechere, in looking over the papers of the deceased, discovered the first part of the Portrait of St. Paul, with the perusal of which she favoured the translator, who, finding it a work of no common importance, was readily induced to render it into English. From time to time different parts of the work were discovered, and though the manuscript was so incorrect and confused, as frequently to stagger the resolution of the translator, yet a strong persuasion that the work was calculated to produce the most desirable effects, encouraged him to persevere till he had completed his undertaking.

It is scarcely necessary to inform the intelligent reader, that the Portrait of St. Paul was originally intended for publication in the author's native country, to which its arguments and quotations apply with peculiar propriety.

It may be more necessary to observe, that, had the life of M. de la Flechere been prolonged, the traits of St. Paul's moral character would have been rendered abundantly more copious and complete.

The translator cannot suffer a second edition of these volumes to make its appearance in the world without thankfully acknowledging the candid reception with which the first edition has been favoured, and expressing his hearty desire that the work may conduce, in some degree, to the establishment of that pure and undefiled religion which it was evidently intended to promote.

ROCKWARDINE,
March 14th, 1791.

THE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

MANY celebrated writers have offered excellent treatises to the public, some on the character of a true Christian, and others on the duties of a good pastor. It were to be wished, that these two objects might be so closely united, as to fall under the same point of view ; and to effect such an union is the design of this work, in which may be seen, at one view, what were the primitive Christians, and the apostolic pastors ; and what they are required to be, who are called to follow them in the progress of piety.

As example is more powerful than precept, it was necessary that some person should be singled out, who was both an excellent Christian, and an eminent minister of Jesus Christ. The person we fix upon is St. Paul, in whom these two characters were remarkably united, and a sketch of whose wondrous portrait we endeavour to exhibit in the following pages. When this apostle is considered as a Christian, his diligence in filling up the duties of his vocation, his patience in times of trial, his courage in the midst of dangers, his perseverance in well-doing, his faith, his humility, his charity, all sweetly blended together, constitute him an admirable model for every Christian. And when we regard him as a dispenser of the mysteries of God, his inviolable attachment to truth, and his unconquerable zeal, equally distant from fanaticism and indifference, deserve the imitation of every minister of the gospel.

The holy scriptures furnish materials in abundance for the present work ; the Acts of the Apostles, from chapter viii., containing little else than a narration of the labours of St. Paul, and an abridgment of his sermons and apologies. The new testament, besides the Acts, contains twenty-two different books, fourteen of which were composed by this apostle himself, with all the frank-

ness suited to the epistolary style, and all the personal detail into which he was obliged to enter when writing, in an uncommon variety of circumstances, to his friends, his brethren, and his spiritual children. It is on such occasions that a man is most likely to discover what he really is; and it is on such occasions that the moral painter may take an author in the most interesting positions, in order to delineate with accuracy his sentiments, his circumstances, and his conduct.

Let it not be said, that, in proposing this apostle as a model to Christians, we do but cast discouragements in the way of those who are at an immense distance behind him, with respect both to grace and diligence. The masterly skill that Raphael and Rubens have discovered in their pieces serves not to discourage modern painters, who rather labour to form themselves by such grand models. Poets and orators are not disheartened by those *chef-d'œuvres* of poetry and eloquence which Homer and Virgil, Demosthenes and Cicero, have transmitted to posterity: why then should we be discouraged by considering the eminent virtues and unwearied labours of this great apostle? The greater the excellence of the pattern proposed, the less likely is the laboured copy to be incomplete.

It is granted, that all the faithful are not called to be ministers, and that all ministers are not appointed, like St. Paul, to establish new churches; but it is maintained, that all Christians, in their different states, are to be filled with the piety of that apostle. If the most inconsiderable trader among us is not allowed to say, "I deal only in trifling articles, and therefore should be indulged with a false balance;"—if such a trader is required to be as just in his shop as a judge on his tribunal;—and if the lowest volunteer in an army is called to show as much valour in his humble post as a general officer in his more exalted station; the same kind of reasoning may be applied to the Christian church; so that her youngest communicant is not permitted to say, "My youth, or the weakness of my sex, excuses me from exercising the charity, the humility,

the diligence, and the zeal, which the scriptures prescribe."

It should be laid down as an incontrovertible truth, that the same zeal which was manifested by St. Paul for the glory of God, and the same charity that he displayed as an apostle, in the very extensive scene of his labours, a minister is called to exercise as a pastor, in his parish, and a private person, as father of a family, in his own house. Nay, even every woman, in proportion to her capacity, and as the other duties of her station permit, should feel the same ardour to promote the salvation of her children and domestics, as St. Paul once discovered to promote that of the ancient Jews and gentiles. Observe in the harvest-field how it fares with the labourers, when they are threatened with an impetuous shower: all do not bind and bear the weighty sheaves; every one is occupied according to their rank, their strength, their age, and their sex; and all are in action, even to the little gleaners. The true church resembles this field. The faithful of every rank, age, and sex have but one heart and one mind. According to their state, and the degree of their faith, all are animated to labour in the cause of God, and all are endeavouring to save either communities, families, or individuals from the wrath to come, as the reapers and gleaners endeavour to secure the rich sheaves, and even the single ears of grain, from the gathering storm.

If, in the course of this work, some truths are proposed which may appear new to the Christian reader, let him candidly appeal for the validity of them to the holy scriptures, and to the testimony of reason, supported by the most respectable authorities, such as the confessions of faith adopted by the purest churches, together with the works of the most celebrated pastors and professors, who have explained such confessions.

Among other excellent ends proposed in publishing the following sheets, it is hoped, that they may bring back bigoted divines to evangelical moderation, and either reconcile, or bring near to one another, the orthodox professor, the imperfect Christian, and the sincere deist.

THE
PORTRAIT OF ST. PAUL.

TRAIT I.
IN THE MORAL CHARACTER OF ST. PAUL.

HIS EARLY PIETY.

THE great apostle of the gentiles bore no resemblance to those who reject the service of God till they are rendered incapable of gratifying their unruly passions. He was mindful of his Creator from his early youth, and as an observer of religious rites, outstripped the most exact and rigid professors of his time ; so that the regularity of his conduct, the fervour of his devotion, and the vivacity of his zeal, attracted the attention of his superiors in every place. Observe the manner in which he himself speaks on this subject, before the tribunal of Festus : “ My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a pharisee.” Acts xxvi. 4, 5. Having occasion afterwards to mention the same circumstances in his epistle to the Galatians, he writes thus : “ Ye have heard of my conversation in time past, how I profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.” Gal. i. 13, 14. And to what an extraordinary pitch of excellence his morality was carried may be inferred from the following short but solemn declaration which was

made in the presence of persons who were very well competent to have convicted him of falsehood, had there been found the least blemish in his outward conduct: "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day." Acts xxiii. 1. Such was the early piety of St. Paul; and such was the righteousness in which he trusted, when, through zeal for the church and state, of which he was a member, he persecuted Christians as disturbers of the public peace.

Having seen the beautiful side of this apostle's early character, let us now consider his defects. As a member of the Jewish church he was inspired with zeal; but that zeal was rigid and severe: as a member of society his manners were probably courteous; but on some occasions his behaviour was tyrannical and inhuman. In a word, he possessed the whole of religion, except those essential parts of it,—humility and charity. Supercilious and impatient, he would bear no contradiction. Presuming upon his own sufficiency, he gave himself no time to compare his errors with truth; and hence, covering his cruelty with the specious name of "zeal," he breathed out "threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." Acts ix. 1. He himself, speaking of this part of his character, makes the following humiliating confession: "I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." 1 Tim. i. 13. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Acts xxvi. 9—11.

Nevertheless, this rigid pharisee, who carried his devotion to bigotry, and his zeal to fury, had an upright heart in the sight of God. "I obtained mercy," says he, after his conversion, "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief;" 1 Tim. i. 13; imagining, that when I persecuted the dis-

ciples of Jesus, I was opposing a torrent of the most dangerous errors.

Piety is that knowledge of God and his various relations to man, which leads us to adore, to love, and obey him in public and in private. This great virtue is the first trait in the moral character of St. Paul; and it is absolutely necessary to the Christian character in general, since it is that parent of all virtues to which God has given the promise of the present life, and of that which is to come. But it is more particularly necessary to those who consecrate themselves to the holy ministry; since, being obliged by their office to exhibit before their flock an example of piety, if they themselves are destitute of godliness, they must necessarily act without any conformity to the sacred character they have dared to assume.

If Quintilian the heathen has laid it down as a general principle, that it is impossible to become a good orator without being a good man; surely no one will deny, that piety should be considered as the first qualification essential to a Christian speaker. M. Roques, in his *Evangelical Pastor*, observes, that "the minister, by his situation, is a man retired from the world, devoted to God, and called to evangelical holiness. He is," continues he, "according to St. Paul, 'a man of God,' that is, a person entirely consecrated to God; a man of superior excellence, a man, in some sense, divine: and to answer, in any degree, the import of this appellation, it is necessary that his piety should be illustrious, solid, and universal." Without doubt those sublime ideas of the holy ministry were collected by this pious author from the writings of St. Paul, who thus addresses Titus upon the same subject: "A minister must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." Titus i. 7—9. He must use "sound speech, that cannot be condemned; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity;

that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of him." Titus ii. 7, 8.

A pastor without piety disgraces the holy profession which he has made choice of, most probably from the same temporal motives which influence others to embrace the study of the law, or the profession of arms. If those who were called to serve tables were to be "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," Acts vi. 3, it is evident, that the same dispositions and graces should be possessed in a more eminent degree by those who are called to minister in holy things. "When thou art converted," said Christ to Peter, "strengthen thy brethren." Luke xxii. 32.

No sight can be more absurd than that of an impenitent infidel engaged in calling sinners to repentance and faith. Even the men of the world look down with contempt upon a minister of this description, whose conduct perpetually contradicts his discourses, and who, while he is pressing upon others the necessity of holiness, indulges himself in the pleasures of habitual sin. Such a preacher, far from being instrumental in effecting true conversions among his people, will generally lead his hearers into the same hypocrisy which distinguishes his own character; since that which was said in ancient times holds equally true in the present day, "Like people, like priest." Hosea iv. 9. Lukewarm pastors make careless Christians; and the worldly preacher leads his worldly hearers as necessarily into carnal security, as a blind guide conducts the blind into the ditch. And to this unhappy source may be traced the degenerate manners of the present age, the reproach under which our holy religion labours, and the increasing triumphs of infidelity.

"The natural man," saith St. Paul, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. Now, if a minister who is destitute of scriptural piety, is counted unable to comprehend the doctrines of the gospel, how much less is he able to publish and explain them! And if those who live according to the vain customs of the world have not

the righteousness of the pharisees, with what propriety can they be called, I will not say true ministers, but even pious deists ?

Though every candidate for the sacred ministry may not be in circumstances to declare, with St. Paul, "I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day," yet all who aspire to that important office should, at least, be able to say with sincerity, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man." Acts xxiv. 16. Such were the morals and the conduct of a Socrates and an Epictetus ; and worshippers like these, "coming from the east and from the west," shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, "while the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." Matt. viii. 11, 12.

TRAIT II.

HIS CHRISTIAN PIETY.

It has been made sufficiently plain, under the preceding article, that St. Paul was possessed of a good degree of piety from his very infancy. Having been brought up in the fear of God by his father, who is supposed to have been a zealous pharisee, he was afterwards instructed at the feet of Gamaliel, a pious doctor of the law, to whose wisdom and moderation St. Luke has borne an honourable testimony. Acts v. 34. And so greatly had he profited in his youth by these inestimable privileges, that "touching the righteousness which is of the law" he was "blameless." But this piety was not sufficient under the new testament.

To become a Christian and a true minister of the gospel, it is necessary to have, not only the piety of a sincere deist, or of a devout Jew, as St. Paul had before his conversion, but also those higher degrees of piety, which that apostle possessed after he had received the twofold gift of deep repentance toward God and living faith in Jesus Christ. The basis of piety among the Jews was a

knowledge of God, as Creator, Protector, and Rewarder ; but in order to have Christian piety, it is necessary, that to this knowledge of God, as Creator, &c., should be added that of God the Redeemer, God the Destroyer of all our evils, God our Saviour ; or, in other words, the knowledge of Jesus Christ. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3.

But who can truly know, I will not say his Saviour, but merely his need of a Saviour, without first becoming acquainted with his own heart, and receiving there a lively impression both of his sin and his danger ? A student in theology, who has not yet submitted himself to the maxim of Solon, "Know thyself ;" and who has never mourned under that sense of our natural ignorance and depravity which forced Socrates to confess the want of a divine instructor ; a candidate, I say, who is wholly unacquainted with himself, instead of eagerly soliciting the imposition of hands, should rather seek after a true understanding of the censure which Christ once passed upon the pastor of the Laodicean church : "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. iii. 17.

If a young man steals into the ministry without this knowledge, far from being able to preach the gospel, he will not even comprehend that first evangelical principle, "Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v. 3. And instead of devoutly offering up to God the prayers of a religious assembly, he will constantly begin the sacred office by an act of hypocrisy, in saying, "Almighty Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have offended against thy holy laws. There is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." After making these confessions in public, when he is interrogated in private respecting that misery and condemnation, under a sense of which he so lately appeared to groan, he will not scruple immediately to contradict what he has so plainly expressed ; thus discovering to every impartial observer, that when he prays in public, he prays, either as a child, who understands not what he repeats ; or

as a deceiver, who appears to believe what he really gives no credit to, and that merely for the sake of enjoying the pension of a minister, and his rank in society.

What is here said of ministers, is equally applicable to Christians in general. If any one dares to approach the sacramental table, there to make a profession of being redeemed from eternal death by the death of Christ, before he is deeply humbled under a sense of the condemnation due to his sin ; can such a one be said to perform an act of piety ? Is he not rather engaged in performing an act of vain ceremony and presumptuous dissimulation in the presence of God ? The feigned humiliation of such a communicant would resemble that of a rebel subject, who, without any consciousness that his actions had merited death, should cast himself, from motives of interest, at the feet of his prince, and affect to rejoice under a sense of that undeserved clemency which permitted him to live. All our professions of faith in Christ are tinctured, more or less, with hypocrisy, unless preceded by that painful conviction of past errors, whence alone can cordially flow those humiliating confessions with which we are accustomed to begin our sacred services.

The true Christian, and, consequently, the true minister, is constrained to cry out, with St. Paul, when he discovered the purity of Jehovah's law and the greatness of his own guilt, "The law is spiritual," and demands an obedience correspondent to its nature ; "but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that I do. I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" Rom. vii. 14—24.

In this manner the true penitent, weary and heavy laden, makes his approaches to the Saviour ; and while he continues to implore his grace and favour, an incomprehensible change takes place in his soul. His groans are suddenly turned into songs of deliverance, and he is enabled to adopt the triumphant language of the great apostle : "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord ;

for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. vii. 25 ; viii. 1, 2.

Every true follower of Christ, therefore, and especially every true minister of the gospel, has really experienced the evil of sin, the inability of man to free himself from such evil, and the efficacy of that remedy which endued the first Christians with so extraordinary a degree of purity, power, and joy. And in testimony of the virtue of this sovereign remedy, every such follower has a right to declare with his happy predecessors, "We give thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. i. 12—14.

When a preacher is possessed of Christian piety, or, in other words, when he has made his peace with God, by that deep repentance which enables us to die unto sin, and by that living faith which unites us to Christ, he naturally invites the world to embrace a Saviour who has wrought for him so wonderful a deliverance ; and this invitation he enforces with all the power and warmth which must ever accompany deep sensibility. After having believed with the heart to the obtaining of righteousness, he is prepared to confess with his lips, and to testify of his salvation, crying out, as sincerely as Simeon, but in a sense far more complete, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace ; for, according to thy word, mine eyes have seen thy salvation." "Here," says Mr. Ostervald, "may be applied what was spoken by our blessed Lord : 'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things.' Erasmus speaks the same thing: *Nihil potentius ad excitandos bonos affectus, quam piorum affectuum fontem habere in pectore. Si vis me flere, dolendum est, &c.* That is, following the idea of the author, 'You will never win others over to a

religious life, unless you yourself are first possessed of piety. This inspires thoughts, dispositions, and words which nothing else can produce.' It is this that animates the voice, the gesture, and every action of the Christian preacher. When he is thus grounded in piety, it is difficult to conceive with what facility and with what success he labours, still enjoying an unspeakable sweetness in himself. Then it is, that he is truly sensible of his vocation ; then he speaks in the cause of God, and then only he is in a proper situation to affect others."

It appeared so necessary to the fathers who composed the synod of Berne, that every minister should be possessed of solid piety, that they believed it impossible for a man to be a good catechist without it. After recommending it to pastors to explain among the youth the Lord's prayer and the apostles' creed, they add, "This will be abundantly more effectual, if, first of all, we are careful that Jesus Christ may arise in our own hearts. The fire with which we should then be animated would soon stir up and warm the docile minds of children. Otherwise, that which reason alone draws from books, and is taught by other men, is no more than a human work, and will be ineffectual, till the great master, the Holy Spirit itself, becomes of the party, creating, renewing, and regenerating to a celestial and eternal life." Acts of the Synod, chap. xxxiv.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE SECOND TRAIT OF THE
CHARACTER OF ST. PAUL.

1. THE experimental knowledge of our misery as sinners, and of our salvation as sinners redeemed, is the portion of every believer under the gospel. If we are destitute of this twofold knowledge, we are yet in a state of dangerous ignorance, and are denominated Christians in vain ; since Christian humility has its source in the knowledge of our corruption, as Christian charity flows from a knowledge of the great salvation which Christ has procured for us ; and if these two graces are not resident in our hearts, our religion is but the shadow of Christianity.

2. As there are some persons whose physiognomy is strongly marked, and who have something peculiarly striking in the whole turn of their countenance ; so there are some, the traits of whose moral character are equally striking, and whose conversion is distinguished by uncommon circumstances. Such was the apostle Paul. But a train of wonderful occurrences is by no means necessary to conversion. For example : it is not necessary that all believers should be actually cast to the earth ; or, that groaning beneath the weight of their sins, and under the conviction of a twofold blindness, they should continue in prayer for three days and nights, without either eating or drinking. But it is absolutely necessary, that they should be sensible of an extreme sorrow for having offended a gracious God ; that they should condemn themselves and their vices by an unfeigned repentance ; and that, confessing the depravity of their whole heart, they should abandon themselves to that sincere distress which refuses all consolation, except that which is from above. Neither is it necessary that they should hear a voice from heaven ; that they should see a light brighter than the sun ; or behold in a vision the minister chosen to bring them consolation in the name of the Lord Jesus. But it is absolutely necessary that they should hear the word of God ; that they should be illuminated by the gospel, and receive directions from any messenger sent for their relief ; till, placing their whole confidence in God, through a gracious Redeemer, they feel a new and heavenly nature produced within them. This sincere repentance and this living faith, or, which is the same thing, this Christian piety, is strictly required of every believer under the new testament.

3. Christian piety constitutes the great difference that is observed between true ministers and unworthy pastors. The latter preach chiefly, either in order to obtain benefices, or to preserve them, or, perhaps, to relieve one another in the discharge of those duties which they esteem heavy and painful ; but the desire of communicating to sinners that spiritual knowledge which is more precious than rubies is the grand motive for preaching with the true ministers of God ; they publish Christ, like St. Paul,

from sentiment and inclination, exposing themselves even to persecution on account of preaching the gospel, like those faithful evangelists who, when commanded to teach no more in the name of Jesus, answered with equal respect and resolution, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts iv. 19, 20.

4. It is worthy of observation, that St. Paul supplicates, not only for all public teachers, but for every private believer in the church, the highest degrees of grace and Christian experience: "I cease not," saith he to the Ephesians, "to make mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe." Eph. i. 16—19. And the same end which this apostle proposed to himself in his private supplications, St. John also proposed to himself in writing his public epistles: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." 1 John i. 3, 4. As though he had said, "We write, if haply we may excite you to seek after higher degrees of faith, charity, and obedience, 'that, being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all saints the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.'" Eph. iii. 17—19. The attentive reader will easily perceive, that what was once the subject of St. Paul's most ardent prayer, is at this day considered, by nominal Christians in general, as a proper subject for the most pointed raillery.

5. Those ministers who are not yet furnished with Christian experience, and who are not seeking after it as

“the pearl of great price,” held out to us in the gospel, are not yet truly converted to the Christian faith ; and, I repeat it after Mr. Ostervald, “being destitute of Christian piety, far from being in circumstances to preach the gospel, they are not able even to comprehend it.” These are they “who, having a form of godliness, deny the power thereof.” 2 Tim. iii. 5. And the greatest eulogium that can be pronounced upon such characters is that with which St. Paul honoured the unbelieving zealots of his time : “I bear them record, that they have a zeal for God ;” but that zeal is unaccompanied with any true knowledge, either of man’s weakness, or the Redeemer’s power : “for they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Rom. x. 2—4.

6. Whoever has not experienced that conviction of sin and that repentance which are described by St. Paul, in Rom. vii., though, like Nicodemus, he may be a doctor in Israel, yet he shall never see the kingdom of God. Totally carnal, and satisfied to continue so, he neither understands nor desires that regeneration which the gospel proposes and insists upon. He endeavours not to fathom the sense of those important words, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John iii. 3. He considers those who are born of the Spirit as rank enthusiasts, and disdains to make any serious inquiry respecting the foundation of their hope. If his acquaintance with the letter of the scripture did not restrain him, he would tauntingly address the artless question of Nicodemus to every minister who preaches the doctrine of regeneration : “How can a man be born when he is old ? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born ?” John iii. 4. And unless he was withheld by a sense of politeness, he would rudely repeat to every zealous follower of St. Paul the ungracious expression of Festus : “Thou art beside thyself ; much” mystic “learning doth make thee mad.” Acts xxvi. 24.

7. On the contrary, a minister who is distinguished by the second trait of the character of St. Paul, at the same time proportionably possesses every disposition necessary to form an evangelical pastor; since it is not possible for Christian piety to exist without the brilliant light of truth, and the burning zeal of charity. And every minister who has this light and this love is enriched with those two powerful resources which enabled the first Christians to act as the citizens of heaven, and the first ministers as ambassadors of Christ.

TRAIT III.

HIS INTIMATE UNION WITH CHRIST BY FAITH.

“I AM come,” said the good Shepherd, “that my sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” John x. 10, 11. “I am the light of the world.” John viii. 12. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” John xiv. 6. “I am the vine; ye are the branches.” John xv. 5. The faithful minister understands the signification of these mysterious expressions. He walks in this “way,” he follows this “light,” he embraces this “truth,” and enjoys this “life” in all its rich abundance. Constantly united to his Lord by an humble faith, a lively hope, and an ardent charity, he is enabled to say, with St. Paul, “The love of Christ constraineth” me; “because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, who died for them, and rose again.” 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. “We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.” Col. iii. 3, 4. “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, but

liveth unto God ; we likewise reckon ourselves to be dead indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ our Lord." Rom. vi. 5, 9—11.

This living faith is the source from whence all the sanctity of the Christian is derived, and all the power of the true minister ; it is the medium through which that sap of grace and consolation, those streams of peace and joy, are perpetually flowing which enrich the believing soul, and make it fruitful in every good work ; or, to speak without a metaphor, from this powerful grace proceeds that love of God and man which influences us to think and act either as members or as ministers of Jesus Christ. The character of the Christian is determined by the strength or weakness of his faith. If the faith of St. Paul had been weak or wavering, his portrait would have been unworthy our contemplation ; he would necessarily have fallen into doubt and discouragement ; he might probably have sunk into sin, as St. Peter plunged into the sea ; he must, sooner or later, have lost his spiritual vigour, and have made the same appearance in the church as those ministers and Christians who are influenced by the maxims of the world. The effects of faith are still truly mysterious, though our Lord has explained them in as intelligible a manner as their nature will permit : " He that abideth in me," by a living faith, " and in whom I abide," by the light of my word and the power of my Spirit, " the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing. If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and " being " withered, is cast into the fire, and burned. Herein is my Father glorified, that," united to me as the branches to the vine, " ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples." John xv. 5, 6, 8.

Penetrated with these great truths, and daily cleaving more firmly to his living Head, the true minister expresses what the natural man cannot receive, and what few pastors of the present age are able to comprehend, though St. Paul not only experienced it in his own heart, but openly declares it in the following remarkable passage : " I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet, not I, but

Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. ii. 20.

TRAIT IV.

HIS EXTRAORDINARY VOCATION TO THE HOLY MINISTRY,
AND IN WHAT THAT MINISTRY CHIEFLY CONSISTS.

EVERY professor of Christianity is acquainted with the honour which our Lord conferred upon the apostle Paul, in not only calling him to a participation of the Christian faith, but by appointing him also to publish the everlasting gospel. A just sense of this double honour penetrated the heart of that apostle with the most lively gratitude : "I give thanks," saith he, "to Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry ; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious : but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant in me, with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life." 1 Tim. i. 12—16. The evangelical ministry, to which St. Paul was immediately called, is in general the same through every age enlightened by the gospel ; and consists in publishing the truth after such a manner that the wicked may be converted, and the faithful edified. The commission which this great apostle received from Christ contains, essentially, nothing more than the acknowledged duty of every minister of the gospel. Leave out the miraculous appearance of our Lord ; pass over the circumstance of a commission given in an extraordinary manner ; substitute the word "sinners" for that of "gentiles," and instead of "Jews" read "hypocritical professors ;" and you will perceive that with these immaterial alterations, the commission of St.

Paul is the commission of every faithful minister in the church. Observe the tenor of it. In person or by my ambassadors, in a manner either extraordinary or ordinary, "I appoint thee a minister and a witness of those things which thou hast seen," or experienced, "and of those things in the which I will appear to thee; and I will deliver thee from the hands of the people, and from the gentiles," (that is, from the hands of hypocritical professors, and from ignorant sinners,) "unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from" the "darkness" of error "to" the "light" of truth, "and from the power of Satan to God," (that is, from sin, which is the image of Satan, to holiness, which is the image of God,) "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts xxvi. 16—18. Such was the office to which St. Paul was appointed, more especially among the gentile nations; and such, without doubt, is the office of every pastor, at least, within the limits of his particular parish. As for taking the ecclesiastical habit, reading over some pages of a liturgy, solemnizing marriages, baptizing infants, keeping registers, and receiving stipends, these things are merely accidental; and every minister should be able to say, with St. Paul, "Christ sent me not," principally, "to baptize," but to preach the gospel." 1 Cor. i. 17.

It is evident, from various passages in the different offices of our church, that our pious reformers were unanimously of opinion that Christ himself appoints, and, in some sort, inspires, all true pastors; that he commits the flock to their keeping, and that their principal care is the same with that of the first evangelists, namely, the conversion of souls. And, truly, the same Lord who appointed his disciples, as apostles, or ocular witnesses of his resurrection, has also appointed others as pastors, or witnesses of a secondary order, and suffragans of the first evangelists. If the witnesses of a higher order were permitted to see Christ after his resurrection, those of a secondary order have felt the efficacy of his resurrection, "being raised together with him," or regenerated through the reception of "a lively hope, by the rising again of

Christ from the dead." 1 Peter i. 3 ; Col. iii. 1. So that every true minister, who bears his testimony to the truths of the gospel, whether it be from the pulpit, or before tribunals, is supported by his own particular experience of Christ's resurrection, as well as by a conviction founded upon the depositions of the first witnesses. Now, this conviction, and this experience, are by no means confined to the ministering servants of God: the hearts of the faithful, in their several generations, have been influenced by them both, if it be true that they have constantly stood prepared to seal with their blood these two important truths,—Jesus Christ "died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." Millions of the laity have been called to give this last proof of their faith; and, beyond all doubt, it is abundantly more difficult to bear testimony to the truth upon a scaffold, than from a pulpit.

If St. Paul and the other apostles are considered as persons of a rank far superior to ours, they themselves cry out, "O sirs, we also are men of like passions with you!" Acts xiv. 15. If it be said that God inspired the apostles with all the wisdom and zeal necessary to fulfil the duties of their high vocation, it may be replied, that our churches implore for their established pastors the same wisdom and zeal, grounding such prayers upon the authority of many plain passages of holy scripture. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Eph. iii. 20, 21.

Moreover, it is an error to suppose that the apostles needed no augmentation of that divine light by which spiritual objects are discerned. St. Paul, who was favoured with an extraordinary inspiration, and that sufficient to compose sacred books in which infallibility is to be found, writes thus to believers: "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. An humble, but happy confession, which, on the one hand, will not suffer us to be discouraged when we are

most sensible of our inadequate light, and teaches us, on the other, how necessary it is to make incessant application to the "Father of lights;" equally guarding us against the pride of some, who imagine themselves to have apprehended all the truth, and the wilful ignorance of others, who pronounce spiritual knowledge to be altogether unattainable.

Now, if the apostle Paul could but imperfectly discern the depths of evangelical truth, and if angels themselves "desire to look into these things;" 1 Peter i. 12; who can sufficiently wonder at the presumption of those men who are so far persuaded of their own infallibility, that they regard all truths which they are unable to fathom as the mere reveries of fanaticism? But, turning our eyes at present from the pernicious error of these self-exalted Christians, let us consider a subject in which we are more interested, than in the extraordinary vocation of St. Paul to the holy ministry.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE ORDINARY VOCATION TO THE HOLY MINISTRY.

"THE harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Matt. ix. 37, 38. Retaining in memory these remarkable words of our Lord, the conscientious man is incapable of thrusting himself into the holy ministry without being first duly called thereto by the "Lord of the harvest," the great "shepherd and bishop of souls."

The minister of the present age is not ordinarily called to the holy ministry, except by carnal motives, such as his own vanity, or his peculiar taste for a tranquil and indolent life. Perhaps his vocation to the ministry is principally from his father or mother, who have determined that their son shall enter into holy orders. Very frequently, if the candidate for holy orders had sincerity enough to discover the real inclination of his heart, he might make his submissions to the dignitaries of our church, and say, "Put me, I pray you, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." 1 Sam. ii. 36.

It is not thus with the real believer who consecrates himself to the holy ministry. He is not ignorant that "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest;" and he is perfectly assured, that no man has a right to take upon himself the sacerdotal dignity, "but he that is called of God," either in an extraordinary manner, as Aaron and St. Paul, or, at least, in an ordinary manner, as Apollos and Timothy. Heb. v. 4, 5. As it is a matter of the utmost importance to understand by what tokens this ordinary vocation to the holy ministry may be discovered, the following reflections upon so interesting a subject may not be altogether superfluous.

If a young man of virtuous manners is deeply penetrated with this humiliating truth,—“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” Rom. iii. 23; if, further, he is effectually convinced of this consolatory truth,—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John iii. 16; if his natural talents have been strengthened by a liberal education; if the pleasure of doing good is sweeter to him than all the pleasures of sense; if the hope of “converting sinners from the error of their way” occupies his mind more agreeably than the idea of acquiring all the advantages of fortune; if the honour of publishing the gospel is superior in his eyes to the honour of becoming the ambassador of an earthly prince;—in short, if by a desire which springs from the fear of God, the love of Christ, and the concern he takes in the salvation of his neighbour, he is led to consecrate himself to the holy ministry; if, in the order of providence, outward circumstances concur with his own designs; and if he solicits the grace and assistance of God with greater eagerness than he seeks the outward vocation from his superiors in the church by the imposition of hands;—he may then satisfy himself that the great High Priest of the Christian profession has set him apart for the high office to which he aspires.

When, after serious examination, any student in theology discovers in himself the necessary dispositions men-

tioned above, then, having received imposition of hands, with faith and humility, from the pastors who preside in the church, he may solidly conclude, that he has been favoured with the ordinary vocation. Hence, looking up to the source of the important office with which he is honoured, he can adopt with propriety the language of St. Paul: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he hath counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." 1 Tim. i. 12. "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel;" for then I should be found unfaithful to my vocation. 1 Cor. ix. 16. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. And if he becomes not like that wicked and slothful servant, who refused to administer to the necessities of his master's household, he will be able at all times to say, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

A person of this description searching the depths of the human heart, of which he has acquired a competent knowledge by the study of his own, meditating with attention upon the proofs, and with humility upon the mysteries, of our holy religion, giving himself up to the study of divine things, and, above all, to prayer and to good works,—such a pastor may reasonably hope to "grow in grace," and in the knowledge of that powerful Saviour whom he earnestly proclaims to others. Nor is it probable that such a one will labour altogether in vain. Gradually instructed in the things which concern the kingdom of God, he will become like the father of a family, bringing forth out of his treasures "things new and old;" and whether he speaks of the old man, the earthly nature, which he has put off with such extreme pain, or the new man, the heavenly nature, which he has put on with

equal joy, Eph. iv. 22—24, he will speak with a conviction so powerful, and a persuasion so constraining, that the careless must necessarily be alarmed, and the faithful encouraged.

TRAIT V

HIS ENTIRE DEVOTION TO JESUS CHRIST.

THE true Christian, called to become a disciple of the blessed Jesus, rather than refuse the offered privilege, renounces his all. If this token of devotion to Christ is discernible in the character of every true Christian, it is still more conspicuous in the character of every true minister. Such a person, inwardly called by the grace of God to a state of discipleship with Christ, and outwardly consecrated to such a state by the imposition of hands, gives himself unreservedly up to the service of his condescending Master. He withstands no longer that permanent command of our exalted Lord to which his first disciples showed so cheerful a submission: "Follow me." Nor is he discouraged while Christ continues: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Matt. xvi. 24. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke ix. 62. "He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Matt. x. 37, 39. If there be found any pastor who cannot adopt the solemn appeal of the first ministers of Christ, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee," Luke xviii. 28, that man is in no situation to copy the example of his forerunners in the Christian church, and is altogether unworthy the character he bears; since, without this detachment from the world, and this devotion to the Son of God, he flatters himself in vain, that he is either a true minister, or a real member, of Jesus Christ.

Observe the declaration of one whose attachment to his divine Master deserves to be had in everlasting remembrance: "Those things which were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, having the righteousness which is of God by faith." Philip. iii. 7—9. "For none of us," true Christians or true ministers, "liveth to himself, or dieth to himself:" but "whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord." Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

Professing to be either a minister or a believer of the gospel, without this entire devotion to Jesus Christ, is to live in a state of the most dangerous hypocrisy; it is neither more nor less than saying, "Lord! Lord!" without having a firm resolution to do what our gracious Master has commanded.

TRAIT VI.

HIS STRENGTH AND HIS ARMS.

THE ministers of the present age are furnished in a manner suitable to their design. As they are more desirous to please than to convert their hearers, so they are peculiarly anxious to embellish the inventions of a seducing imagination: they are continually seeking after the beauty of metaphors, the brilliancy of antitheses, the delicacy of description, the just arrangements of words, the aptness of gesture, the modulations of voice, and every other studied ornament of artificial eloquence; while the true minister, effectually convinced of the excellence of the gospel, relies alone for the effect of his public ministry upon the force of truth, and the assistance of his divine Master.

Observe the manner in which St. Paul expresses him-

self upon this subject : “ We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe, and therefore speak.” 2 Cor. iv. 13. “ And I, brethren, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power : that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 1—5. “ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

The true minister, following the example of St. Paul, after having experienced the power of these victorious arms, exhorts every soldier of Christ to provide himself with the same spiritual weapons : “ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand. For we wrestle not” merely “ against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And,” that you may perform heroic service with these arms, “ pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” Eph. vi. 10—18.

So long as the faithful minister or servant of Christ wears and wields these scriptural arms, he will be truly

invincible. But no man can gird himself with these invisible weapons, except he be born of the Spirit ; nor can any Christian soldier employ them to good purpose, unless he be first endued with all that divine power which flows from the love of God and man ; he must feel, at least, some sparks of that fire of charity which warmed the bosom of St. Paul when he cried out, " Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause : for the love of Christ " and of souls " constraineth us." 2 Cor. v. 13, 14.

" From the time that the eyes of St. Paul were opened to a perception of the gospel," says M. Romilly, pastor of a church in Geneva, " we find him no longer the same person ; he is another man, he is a new creature, who thinks no more but on gospel truths, who hears nothing, who breathes nothing, but the gospel, who speaks on no other subject, who attends to no other thing, but the voice of the gospel, who desires all the world to attend with him to the same voice, and wishes to communicate his transports to all mankind. From this happy period, neither the prejudices of flesh and blood, neither respect to man, nor the fear of death, nor any other consideration, is able to withstand him in his course. He moves on with serenity in a path sown thick with reproaches and pain. What has he to fear ? He despises the maxims of the world ; nay, the world itself,—its hatred as well as its favour, its joys as well as its sorrows, its meanness as well as its pomp. Time is no longer an object with him, nor is his economy regulated by it. He is superior to every thing : he is immortal. Though the universe arms itself against him, though hell opens its abysses, though affliction assaults him on every side, he stands immovable in every storm, looking with contempt upon death, conscious that he can never die. Superior to all his enemies, he resists their united attempts with the arms of the gospel, opposing to time and hell eternity and heaven."

TRAIT VII.

HIS POWER TO BIND, TO LOOSE, AND TO BLESS, IN THE
NAME OF THE LORD.

THE armour of God described in the preceding article is common to all Christians; but the true minister is girded with weapons of a peculiar temper. As a Christian, his sword is the word of God in general; but as a minister, it is especially those parts of the gospel by which he is invested with authority to preach the word of God, and to perform the functions of an ambassador of Jesus Christ. "Go," said our blessed Master to his first disciples, "and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth" my doctrine "shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark xvi. 15, 16. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." John xiii. 20. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth," according to the spirit of my gospel, "shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xviii. 18.

Behold from whence the ministers of Christ have authority to absolve true penitents, and to excommunicate obstinate sinners! an authority which some have called "the power of the clergy;"—a power which unrighteous pastors so much abuse, and which the faithful never presume to exercise but with the utmost solemnity;—a power which, nevertheless, belongs to them of divine right, and which can be denied them with no more reason than they can refuse the sacramental cup to the people. Such, at least, is the judgment of many excellent and learned divines;

among whom may be reckoned M. Ostervald and M. Roques. It may, however, be inquired, with propriety, in this place, Can ecclesiastics be justified in still making use of their authority in these respects, unless they do it with prudence and impartiality? And would it not become them to exercise the ecclesiastic discipline in an especial manner upon unworthy pastors, following the maxim of St. Peter: "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God?" 1 Peter iv. 17.

Invested with the authority which Christ has conferred upon him, the true minister is prepared to denounce the just judgments of God against obstinate sinners, to console the dejected, and to proclaim the promises of the gospel to every sincere believer, with an energy unknown to the worldly pastor, and with a power which is accompanied by the seal of the living God. Thus, when such a minister clearly discerns the profound malice of another Elymas, he is permitted to say, with the authority of an ambassador of Jesus Christ, "O full of all subtilty, and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? Behold, the hand of the Lord shall be upon thee." Acts xiii. 10, 11. But the true minister is careful never to abuse this awful power. "We can do nothing," says St. Paul, "against the truth, but for the truth: I write these things being absent, lest, being present, I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction." 2 Cor. xiii. 8, 10. The denunciation of vengeance is to the minister of Christ what the execution of judgment is to the God of love,—his painful and "strange work."

The good pastor, conscious that the ministration of mercy exceeds in glory the ministration of condemnation, places his chief glory and pleasure in spreading abroad the blessings of the new covenant. He knows that the promises are yea and amen in that beneficent Redeemer who gave the following charge to his first missionaries: "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: if not, it shall turn to you again."

Luke x. 5, 6. The wishes and prayers of a minister who acts and speaks in conformity to the intent of this benign charge, really communicate the peace and benediction of his gracious Master to those who are meet for their reception; and according to the degree of his faith he can write to the faithful of distant churches, with the confidence of St. Paul: "I am persuaded that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Rom. xv. 29. Whenever he salutes his brethren, his pen or his lips become the channel of those evangelical wishes which flow from his heart: "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 2. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Thus the true minister approves himself a member of the "royal priesthood," a priest of the Most High, "after the order of Melchizedek," who blessed the patriarch Abraham; or rather, a ministering servant of the Son of God, who was manifested in the flesh, that "in him all the families of the earth might be blessed."

Great God, grant that the whole company of Christian pastors may be men after thine own heart! Leaving to the ignorant those compliments which a slavish dependence has invented, may thy ministers perpetually carry about them the love, the gravity, and the apostolic authority which belong to their sacred character! May all the benedictions which thou hast commissioned them to pronounce cause them still to be received in every place "as angels of God!" Gal. iv. 14. Far from being despised as hypocrites, shunned as troublesome guests, or feared as men of a covetous and tyrannical disposition, may that moment always be esteemed a happy one in which they enter any man's habitation; and whenever they make their appearance upon these charitable occasions, may those who compose the family, each seeking to give the first salute, cry out, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!" Rom. x. 15.

The power of pronouncing exhortations and blessings is not the exclusive privilege of pastors, but belongs to all

experienced believers. The patriarchs had a right to bless their children ; and Jacob blessed, not only his sons and grandsons, but also the king of Egypt himself. If the followers of Christ, then, are deprived of this consolatory power, the children of ancient Israel were more highly privileged than the members of the Christian church, who are called, nevertheless, to receive more precious benedictions, and to be, as our Lord expresses it, "the salt of the earth," and "the light of the world." When St. Paul writes to believers, "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy : for he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort," (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 3,) he doubtless excites them to ask of God that overflowing charity, and that patriarchal authority, without which it is impossible for them fully to comply with the following apostolic injunction : "Bless, and curse not ; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing;" and, without a high degree of which they cannot sincerely obey those distinguished precepts of our blessed Lord : "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Rom. xii. 14 ; 1 Peter iii. 9 ; Matt. v. 44.

TRAIT VIII.

THE EARNESTNESS WITH WHICH HE BEGAN AND CONTINUED TO FILL UP THE DUTIES OF HIS VOCATION.

THE true penitent, having renounced himself for the honour of following his exalted Lord, stands faithfully in his own vocation, whether it be secular or ecclesiastic. He is prepared, upon all occasions, to perform the will of his gracious Master ; and if he is commissioned to act as a minister of Christ, after furnishing himself with "the whole armour of God," he will expose himself, without fear, to the most threatening dangers, that he may compel sinners to come in to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

"I rejoice," saith St. Paul, "in my sufferings for the body of Christ, which is the church : whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God ; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages, but which is now made manifest to his saints : to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles ; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory : whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus : whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you," and for all those among whom the word of God is preached ; "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Col. i. 24—29 ; ii. 1—3.

Such are the great ideas which the apostle Paul entertained of the ministry he had received : and observe the assiduity with which he discharged the duties of so important an office. "Ye know," says he, speaking to the pastors to whom he committed the care of one of his flocks, "from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations ; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves ; for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves," unfaithful pastors, "enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn

every one night and day with tears." Acts xx. 18—31. In every place he discharged the obligations of a minister with the same application and zeal, travelling from city to city, and from church to church, bearing testimony to "the redemption that is in Jesus," and declaring the great truths of the gospel. When the synagogues were shut against him, he preached in the schools of philosophers, upon the sea-shore, on shipboard, and even in prisons; and while he dwelt a prisoner in his own house at Rome, "he received all that came in unto him, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening." Acts xxviii. 23.

Thus the Son of God himself once publicly laboured for the conversion of sinners, sometimes going through "all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel;" (Matt. iv. 23;) and at other times instructing the multitudes, who either followed them into the fields, or resorted to the house where he lodged; "for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Mark vi. 31. And when through the pleasure of bringing the Samaritans acquainted with spiritual truth, he disregarded the necessities of nature, his disciples, requesting him to partake of the food they had prepared, received from him this memorable answer: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of; my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work," namely, the glorious work of enlightening and saving sinners. John iv. 31—34.

Thus St. Paul was diligently and daily occupied in fulfilling the duties of his apostolic vocation; and thus every minister of the gospel is called to labour in his appointed sphere. It remains to be known, whether all who do not labour according to their ability are not condemned by the following general rule: "If any will not work, neither shall he eat." 2. Thess. iii. 10. For these words signify, applied to the present case, that they who will not labour as pastors, should by no means be permitted to eat the bread of pastors; an evangelical precept this, which

deserves the strictest attention, as the bread of pastors is, in some sort, sacred bread, since it is that which the piety of the public has set apart for the support of those who have abandoned every worldly pursuit, that they might dedicate themselves freely and fully to the service of the church.

TRAIT IX.

THE MANNER IN WHICH HE DIVIDED HIS TIME BETWEEN PRAYER, PREACHING, AND THANKSGIVING.

THE minister of the present age is but seldom engaged in publishing to his people the truths of the gospel; and still more rarely in supplicating for them the possession of those blessings which the gospel proposes. It is chiefly before men that he lifts up his hands, and affects to pour out a prayer from the fulness of his heart: while the true minister divides his time between the two important and refreshing occupations of preaching and prayer; by the former, making a public offer of divine grace to his hearers; and by the latter, soliciting for them in secret the experience of that grace. Such was the manner of the blessed Jesus himself, who, after having reproved his disciples for the low degree of their faith, retired either into gardens, or upon mountains, praying that their "faith might not fail." The good pastor, who constantly imitates the example of his divine master, is prepared to adopt the following language of St. Paul, in addressing the flock upon which he is immediately appointed to attend: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 14—19. "And this I pray, that your

love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Phil. i. 9—11. By prayers like these, the apostle Paul was accustomed to water, without ceasing, the heavenly seed which he had so widely scattered through the vineyard of his Lord, manifesting an increasing attachment to those among whom he had at any time published the tidings of salvation, and breathing out, in all his epistles to distant churches, the most earnest desire that God would "fulfil" in them "all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them, and they in him." 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.

Pastors, who pray thus for their flocks, pray not in vain. Their fervent petitions are heard, sinners are converted, the faithful are edified, and thanksgiving is shortly joined to supplication. Thus the same apostle: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. i. 4—7. "Having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love unto all the saints, I cease not to give thanks for you." Eph. i. 15, 16.

Worldly ministers have no experience of the holy joy that accompanies these secret sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. But this can by no means be considered as matter of astonishment. Is their attachment to Christ as sincere as that of his faithful ministers? Are they as solicitous for the salvation of their hearers? Do they teach and preach with equal zeal? Do they pray with the same ardour and perseverance?

TRAIT X.

THE FIDELITY WITH WHICH HE ANNOUNCED THE SEVERE
THREATENINGS AND CONSOLATORY PROMISES OF THE
GOSPEL.

THE worldly minister has neither the courage nor the tenderness of the true pastor. He is fearful of publishing those truths which are calculated to alarm the careless sinner; and he knows not in what manner to apply the promises of the gospel for the relief of those who mourn. If ever he attempts to descant upon the consolatory truths of the gospel, he only labours to explain what is nearly unintelligible to himself; and all his discourses on subjects of this nature are void of that earnest persuasion, and that unction of love, which characterize the ministers of Christ. On the other hand, his dread of giving offence will not suffer him to address sinners of every rank with the holy boldness of the prophet Samuel: "If ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you. If ye still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed." 1 Sam. xii. 15, 25. The faithful pastor, on the contrary, conscious that the harshest truths of the gospel are as necessary as they are offensive, courageously insists upon them in the manner of St. Paul: "Thinkest thou, O man, that doest such things, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" Know this, that "after thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; for indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Rom. ii. 3, 5, 9. "If every transgression" under the first covenant "received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." Heb. ii. 2, 3. "This ye know, that no unclean person, nor covetous man, hath any inheritance in the

kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words : for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Eph. v. 5, 6. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth," namely, the prophet Moses, "much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven," namely, the Saviour Jesus Christ. "Wherefore let us serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear : for our God is a consuming fire." Heb. xii. 25, 28, 29.

But though the true minister courageously announces the most severe declarations of the word to the unbelieving and the impenitent, yet he is never so truly happy as when he invites the poor in spirit to draw forth the riches of grace from the treasury of God's everlasting love. "God hath not," saith St. Paul, "appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 9. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15. "Ye are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Heb. xii. 18—24 ; x. 19—22. "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Rom. v. 10 ; viii. 32—34.

When these exhilarating declarations are found insufficient to revive the hearts of the contrite, the evangelical preacher fails not to multiply them in the most sympathizing and affectionate manner. "I say unto you," continues he, "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men ; for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Matt. xii. 31 ; 1 John i. 7. "And by him all who believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts xiii. 39. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ;" (Rom. viii. 1 ;) "for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. v. 20.

Such are the cordials which the faithful evangelist administers to those who are weary and heavy laden ; —precious cordials, which the worldly pastor can never effectually apply ; which he either employs out of season, or renders useless by such additions of his own as are contrary to the spirit of the gospel.

TRAIT XI.

HIS PROFOUND HUMILITY.

THERE is no evil disposition of the heart with which the clergy are so frequently reproached as pride. And it is with reason that we oppose this sinful temper, especially when it appears in pastors, since it is so entirely contrary to the spirit of the gospel, that the apostle Paul emphatically terms it "the condemnation of the devil." 1 Tim. iii. 6.

There is no amiable disposition which our Lord more strongly recommended to his followers, than lowliness of mind. From his birth to his death he gave himself a striking example of the most profound humility, joined to the most ardent charity. After having washed the feet of his first disciples, that is, after he had taken the place of a slave at their feet, he addressed them as follows :

“Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.” John xiii. 12—16. Again he says to the same effect, “Ye know that the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” Mark x. 42—45.

Real Christianity is the school of humble charity, in which every true minister can say with Christ, according to his growth in grace, “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” And unhappy will it be for those who, reversing Christianity, say, by their example, which is more striking than all their discourses, “Learn of us to be fierce and revengeful, at the expense of peace, both at home and abroad.” They who receive the stipends of ministers, while they are thus endeavouring to subvert the religion they profess to support, render themselves guilty not only of hypocrisy, but of a species of sacrilege.

It is supposed, that St. Peter had the pre-eminence among the apostles, at least by his age; it is certain that he spake in the name of the other apostles; that he first confessed Christ in two public orations; that our Lord conferred particular favours upon him; that he was permitted to be one of the three witnesses of his Master’s transfiguration and agony; and that, on the day of Pentecost, he proved the power of his apostolic commission by introducing three thousand souls at once into the kingdom of Christ. Far, however, from arrogating upon these accounts a spiritual supremacy over his brethren, he assumed no other title but that which was given in com-

mon to all his fellow-labourers in the ministry: "The elders which are among you," says he, "I exhort, who am also an elder: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. v. 1—3. A piece of advice this, which is too much neglected by those prelates who distinguish themselves from their brethren, yet more by an antichristian pride, than by those ecclesiastical dignities to which they have made their way by the intrigues of ambition.

All pastors should seek after humility with so much the greater concern, since some among them, seduced with the desire of distinguishing themselves as persons of eminence in the church, after making certain ecclesiastical laws contrary to the word of God, have become persecutors of those who refused submission to their tyrannical authority. Observe here the injustice of some modern philosophers, who, misrepresenting the Christian religion,—a religion which breathes nothing but humility and love,—set it forth as the cause of all the divisions, persecutions, and massacres, which have ever been fomented or perpetrated by its corrupt professors; disasters which, far from being the produce of real Christianity, have their principal source in the vices of a supercilious, uncharitable, and antichristian clergy.

The church will always be exposed to these imputations, till every ecclesiastic shall imitate St. Paul, as he imitated Christ. That apostle, ever anxious to tread in the steps of his divine Master, was peculiarly distinguished by his humility to God and man. Ever ready to confess his own native poverty, and to magnify the riches of grace, he cries out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Who is properly qualified to discharge all the functions of the holy ministry? "Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." 2 Cor. ii. 16;

iii. 4—6. “Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” 1 Cor. iii. 5—7. “I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle; but by the grace of God I am what I am.” 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. “God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ: but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7.

If the humility of St. Paul is strikingly evident in these remarkable passages, it is still more strongly expressed in those that follow:—“Ye see, brethren, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.” 1 Cor. i. 26—29. “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, who am nothing, who am the chief of sinners, is this grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Eph. iii. 8; 2 Cor. xii. 11; 1 Tim. i. 15.

Reader, if thou hast that opinion of thyself which is expressed in the foregoing passages, thou art an humble Christian; thou canst truly profess thyself the servant of all those who salute thee; thou art such already by thy charitable intentions, and art seeking occasions of demonstrating, by actual services, that thy tongue is the organ, not of an insidious politeness, but of a sincere heart. Like a true disciple of Christ, who concealed himself, when the multitude would have raised him to a throne, and who presented himself when they came to drag him to his cross, thou hast a sacred pleasure in humbling thyself before God and man, and art anxious,

without hypocrisy or affectation, to take the lowest place among thy brethren.

The humble Christian, convinced of his wants and his weakness, feels it impossible to act like those proud and bashful poor who will rather perish in their distress, than solicit the assistance of their brethren. St. Paul had nothing of this false modesty about him. Penetrated with a deep sense of his own unworthiness and insufficiency, after imploring for himself the gracious assistance of God, he thus humbly solicits the prayers of all the faithful: "Brethren, pray for us." 1 Thess. v. 25. "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together in your prayers for me." Rom. xv. 30. "Pray always for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak." Eph. vi. 18—20. "You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf." 2 Cor. i. 11.

Thus humility, or poverty of spirit, which is set forth by Christ as the first beatitude, leads us, by prayer, to all the benedictions of the gospel, and to that lively gratitude which gives birth to thanksgiving and joy. Lovely humility, penetrate the hearts of all Christians, animate every pastor, give peace to the church, and happiness to the universe.

TRAIT XII.

THE INGENUOUS MANNER IN WHICH HE ACKNOWLEDGED AND REPAIRED HIS ERRORS.

It is difficult for a proud man to confess himself in an error; but they who are possessed of humility and love can make such acknowledgments with cheerfulness. When St. Paul was called upon to justify his conduct

before the tribunal of the Jews, the same spirit of resentment which animated his persecutors suddenly seized upon the more passionate of his judges, when the high priest, still more exasperated than the rest, commanded those who stood near Paul "to smite him on the mouth." It was in that moment of surprise and indignation that the apostle, unacquainted with the author of so indecent a proceeding, and not imagining that the president of an august assembly could so far forget his own dignity as to act with so reprehensible an impetuosity, gave this sharp reply to so unjust an order : "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall : for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Immediately those who stood by, reproaching him with his apparent disrespectful carriage, inquired with the utmost indignation, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" Here the apostle, far from justifying his own conduct, in resenting the severity of a judge who had degraded himself by an act of the most flagrant injustice, immediately acknowledged his error ; and, lest the example he had given should encourage any person to withhold the respect due to a magistrate, still more respectable by his office, than blamable by his rigorous proceedings, he endeavoured to make instant reparation for his involuntary offence, by citing a pertinent passage from the law, answering with all meekness, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest : for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Acts xxiii. 2—5.

There is another instance of the indiscretion and candour of this apostle. Paul and Barnabas, going forth to publish the gospel, took for their companion John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas. That young evangelist, however, staggered by the dangers which those apostles were constantly obliged to encounter, forsook them at Pamphylia, in the midst of their painful labours. But afterwards, repenting of his former irresolution, he offered to accompany them in another journey. Barnabas, who had charity enough to hope all things of his nephew, wished to afford him a second trial ; while Paul, whose prudence taught him to fear every thing from a young man who had

already given an indisputable proof of his inconstancy, refused his consent. At length the two apostles, unable to decide the matter to their mutual satisfaction, took the resolution of separating one from another : Paul went to preach the gospel in Syria with Silas ; while Barnabas, accompanied by his nephew, proceeded to proclaim Christ in the isle of Cyprus. Thus the separations of true Christians, without producing any schism in the church, frequently tend to the propagation of the gospel.

Time alone could determine whether Barnabas was deceived by an abundance of charity, or St. Paul through an excess of prudence. The event turned the balance in favour of the judgment of Barnabas : the conduct of John Mark on this second mission was irreproachable. From this time St. Paul, with his usual candour, forgetting the former instability of Mark, placed the utmost confidence in him, received him with joy, as the companion of his labours, revoked the order he had formerly given respecting him, and recommended him to the churches as a faithful minister. Thus much may be inferred from the following passage in his epistle to the Colossians : “ Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, saluteth you, and Marcus, sister’s son to Barnabas, touching whom ye received commandments : if he come unto you, receive him.” Col. iv. 10.

Thus the sincere followers of Christ are ever anxious to repair their involuntary faults ;—faults which we, as well as the apostles, are always exposed to the commission of, and which should constrain us to say, with St. Paul, “ Now we know ” things and persons “ in part.” This imperfection in our knowledge will sometimes produce errors in our judgment, and those errors may probably influence our conduct. But if, in these failings, there is no mixture of malice ; if we sin through ignorance, and in the integrity of our hearts, God imputes not to us those errors ; provided we are always prepared, like St. Paul, to confess and repair them. To err is the lot of humanity ; obstinacy in error is the character of a demon : but humbly to acknowledge, and anxiously to repair, an error, is to exhibit a virtue more rare and valuable than

innocence itself, when accompanied with any degree of conceit, and pride.

They who give the portraits of legendary saints generally paint them without a single failing; but they who wish faithfully to imitate the sacred authors are obliged to employ shades, as well as lights, even in their most celebrated pieces. If this part of the portrait of St. Paul should not appear brilliant, it will serve, at least, to manifest the reality of the original, the liberality of the apostle, and the fidelity of the painter.

TRAIT XIII.

HIS DETESTATION OF PARTY SPIRIT AND DIVISIONS.

WHILE the spirit of the world is confessedly a spirit of particular interest, pride, and division, the spirit of true religion is manifested, among its sincere professors, as a spirit of concord, humility, and brotherly love. The true minister, animated in an especial manner by this divine spirit, losing sight of his own reputation and honour, is unweariedly engaged in seeking the glory of God and the edification of his neighbour. Perfectly satisfied with the lowest place, and distinguished as much by condescension to his brethren as by respect to his superiors, he is ever on his guard against that spirit of party which is continually seeking to disturb the union of the church, whether it be by too great a fondness for particular customs, by an obstinate zeal for any system of doctrines, or by too passionate an attachment to some eminent teacher.

Without persecuting those who are led by so dangerous a spirit, the good pastor employs every effort to re-unite them under the great Head of the church. Arguing against the folly of such as are ready to separate themselves from the company of their brethren, he takes up the language of St. Paul, and says, "O foolish" Christians, "who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? Are ye so foolish? hav-

ing begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Gal. iii. 1, 3. "Ye have" indeed "been called unto liberty: only use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. Now the works of the flesh are manifest;" among which are these, "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, and heresies: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance. If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Gal. v. 13—26. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Endeavour," therefore, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Eph. iv. 3—6.

When the people seek to honour a true minister by placing him at the head of any party in the church, he refuses the proffered dignity with an humble and holy indignation. His soul is constantly penetrated with those sentiments under the influence of which the apostle Paul thus nobly expressed himself: "I seek not mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." 1 Cor. x. 33. "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind. For it hath been declared unto me, that there are contentions among you;" and "that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." But "is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" 1 Cor. i. 10—13. "Who is Paul, but a minister by whom ye believed? Therefore let no man glory in men, whether Paul, or

Apollos, or Cephas ;" (1 Cor. iii. 5, 21, 22 ;) but rather in "our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Eph. iii. 14, 15.

By such exhortations it is, and by maintaining, at the same time, a conduct conformable to the nature of such exhortations, that every faithful minister endeavours to engage Christians of all denominations to walk together "in love, as Christ also walked," (Eph. v. 2,) "proving what is acceptable unto the Lord," (Eph. v. 10,) and "submitting one to another in the fear of God," (Eph. v. 21,) till the arrival of that promised period, when the whole company of the faithful shall be of one heart and one mind.

But after all these exertions for the extirpation of a sectarian spirit from the church, they who content themselves with the exterior of Christianity, as the pharisees were contented with the ceremonies of the Mosaic worship, will, sooner or later, accuse every evangelical pastor of attempting to form a particular sect. When modern pharisees observe the strict union which reigns among true believers,—a union which every faithful minister labours to establish among his people, as well by example as by precept ; when they behold penitent sinners deeply sensible of their guilt, and frequently assembling together for the purpose of imploring the blessings of "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ;" they immediately take the alarm, and cry out, "These men do exceedingly trouble our city, teaching customs, which are not lawful for us to receive," and maintaining such a conduct as is most inconvenient for us to follow. Acts xvi. 20, 21.

Happy are those cities in which the minister of Christ is able to discover a Nicodemus, a Gamaliel, or some worshippers possessed of as much candour as the Jews of Rome, who desired to hear what the persecuted Paul had to offer in behalf of that newly-risen sect which was "every where spoken against." Acts xxviii. 22. Till this amiable candour shall universally prevail among the nominal members of the church, true Christianity, even in the centre of Christendom, will always find perverse contradiction, and sometimes cruel persecution.

TRAIT XIV

HIS REJECTION OF PRAISE.

THE minister of the present day labours chiefly with a view to his own advantage and honour. He endeavours to please, that he may be admired of men. "He loves the chief seats in synagogues," public greetings, and honourable titles; (Matt. xxiii. 6, 7;) thus tacitly challenging, by his unreasonable pretensions to the respect and homage of men, a part of that glory which is due to God alone.

A totally different character is maintained by the true minister. His discourses, his actions, his look, his deportment, all agree to say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." Psalm cxv. 1. If the arm of the Omnipotent enables him to perform any extraordinary work, which the multitude do not immediately refer to the "Author of every good and perfect gift," he cries out, with St. Peter, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness" we had performed what appears to excite your astonishment? "The God of our fathers hath," upon this occasion, "glorified his Son Jesus: and the faith which is by him" hath effected this extraordinary work in the presence of you all. Acts iii. 12, 13, 16. On all occasions, he can say, with the great apostle, "Do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men," unless for their edification, "I should not be the servant of Christ." Gal. i. 10. "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." 1 Cor. iv. 3. "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts. Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others." 1 Thess. ii. 4, 6. By such a conduct he distinguishes himself as a faithful ambassador of the blessed Jesus, who expressed himself in the following lowly terms to those who had reproached him with a spirit of self-exaltation:—"I do

nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God." John viii. 28, 50, 54.

There may be peculiar cases, in which a ministering servant of God may be allowed to call upon Christians for a public testimony of their approbation; and when this is refused, he is justified in modestly calling their attention to every past proof of his integrity and zeal. Thus St. Paul, as a proper means of maintaining his authority among the Corinthians, who had manifested an unjust partiality toward teachers of a very inferior order, entered into a long detail of those revelations and labours which gave him a more than ordinary claim to the respect of every church. But whenever he commended himself, he did it with the utmost reluctance, as one constrained by the peculiarity of his circumstances to act in immediate contrariety to his real disposition. Hence, when he recounts the particular favours with which God had honoured him, he speaks in the third person, as of another man. "Of such a one will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." 2 Cor. xii. 5. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number of those who commend themselves, measuring themselves by themselves," without any reference to the excellent graces and endowments of others. "But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor. x. 12, 17, 18.

Nothing affords greater satisfaction to false apostles than commendation and praise; while the true minister shrinks with horror from those very honours which they assume all the forms of Proteus to obtain. When the multitude, led by their admiration of a faithful preacher, follow him with unsuitable expressions of applause, he meets them with unfeigned indignation, arrests their impious plaudits, and rejects their idolatrous adulations, crying out with St. Paul, "Sirs! why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye

should turn from these vanities unto the living God." Acts xiv. 15. We are neither "the way, the truth," nor "the life;" but we point you to that way which the truth has discovered, and through which eternal life may be obtained, entreating you to walk therein with all simplicity and meekness. And remember, that instead of affecting in our discourses that vain wisdom which the world so passionately admires, we faithfully proclaim Christ; and, to humble us the more before God and man, "we preach Christ crucified." 1 Cor. i. 23.

By this humble carriage the ministering disciples of Christ are principally known. By this they copy the amiable example of John the baptist, who cheerfully humbled himself, that Christ might be exalted, crying out in the language of that self-renouncing teacher, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! There standeth one among you, whom ye know not, whose shoe's latchet we are not worthy to unloose. We baptize with water; but he baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Beware then of entertaining too high an idea of our ministry; and remember, that "he must increase" in your estimation, "but we must decrease." John i. 26, 33; iii. 30.

After beholding John the baptist, who was accounted greater than any of the prophets, abasing himself in the presence of Christ; and after hearing St. Paul, who was far superior to the baptist, exclaiming in the humility of his soul, "I live not, but Christ liveth in me;" how can we sufficiently express our astonishment at the conduct of those titular apostles, who either set up a vain philosophy in the place of Christ, or employ the cross of their Lord as a kind of pedestal for the support of those splendid monuments by which their pride is endeavouring to perpetuate the memory of their eloquence. Self-conceited orators! When shall we rank you with the faithful ministers of the humble Jesus? When shall we behold the character you have assumed, and the conduct you maintain, sweetly harmonizing with each other? When shall we hear you addressing your flocks with the unaffected simplicity and condescension of the great apostle?—

"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and," far from elevating ourselves above you, on account of the commission we have received, "ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." 2 Cor. iv. 5. Then we might with propriety salute you, as humble imitators of St. Paul, as zealous ministers of the gospel, and as faithful servants of that condescending Saviour, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Matt. xx. 28.

TRAIT XV

HIS UNIVERSAL LOVE.

TRUE Christians are distinguished from Jews, Mahometans, and all other worshippers, by that spirit of universal love, which is the chief ornament and glory of their profession; but among evangelical pastors, this holy disposition appears in a more eminent degree. They feel for the inconsiderate and the sinful that tender compassion of which Christ has left us an example. Their conduct answers to that beautiful description of charity, with which St. Paul presented the Corinthian church, and which may be considered as an emblematical representation of his own character from the time of his conversion to the Christian faith. Universal love is that invigorating sap, which, passing from the "true vine" into its several branches, renders them fruitful in every good work. But this divine principle circulates through chosen ministers with peculiar force, and in more than ordinary abundance, as so many principal boughs, by which a communication is opened between the root and the lesser branches.

The faithful pastor entertains an affecting remembrance of those benevolent expressions which the good Shepherd addressed to the apostle Peter, and in the person of that apostle to all his successors in the ministry, repeating them even to the third time: "Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep." As though he had said, "The greatest proof you can possibly give of your unfeigned attachment to me is, to

cherish the souls which I have redeemed, and to make them the objects of your tenderest regard." Such is the affectionate precept which every faithful minister has received together with his sacred commission, and to which he yields a more ready and cheerful obedience, from a firm dependence upon the following solemn declaration of his gracious Master: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, he shall say" to all the children of love, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done good unto one of the least of these my brethren," whether their wants were corporeal or spiritual, "ye have done it unto me." Matt. xxv. 31, 40.

The love of the evangelical pastor, like that of St. Paul, is unbounded: "God," saith that charitable apostle, "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. I exhort therefore, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." 1 Tim. ii. 1—4. But, not content with submitting to the exhortation of St. Paul, with respect to the duty of universal prayer, he endeavours to copy the example of that apostle, in labouring for the salvation of all men: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." 1 Cor. ix. 22. Being by regeneration "a partaker of the divine nature," (2 Peter i. 4,) he bears a lovely, though humble, resemblance to his heavenly Parent, whose chief perfection is love. Like the high priest of his profession, he breathes nothing but charity; and like the Father of lights, he makes the sun of his beneficence to rise upon all men. To describe this lesser sun in its unlimited course, and to point out the admirable variety with which it distributes its light and its heat, is to delineate with precision the character of a faithful pastor.

TRAIT XVI.

HIS PARTICULAR LOVE TO THE FAITHFUL.

THE universal love of the true minister manifests itself in a particular manner, according to the different situations of those who are the objects of it. When he finds the whole conduct of professing Christians conformable to the nature of their sacred profession, "he loves them with a pure heart fervently;" 1 Peter i. 22; and, giving way to the effusions of a holy joy, he expresses his affection in words like these: "Brethren, we are comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." And "what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God?" 1 Thess. iii. 7—9. In these expressions of St. Paul, an astonishing degree of affection is discovered. "Now we live:" as though he had said, "We have a twofold life,—the principal life, which we receive immediately from Christ, and an accessory life, which we derive from his members, through the medium of brotherly love. And so deeply are we interested in the concerns of our brethren, that we are sensibly affected by the variations they experience in their spiritual state, through the power of that Christian sympathy which we are unable to describe. Thus, when sin has detached any of our brethren from Christ, and separated them from the body of the faithful, we are penetrated with the most sincere distress; and, on the contrary, whenever they become more affectionately connected with us, and more intimately united to Christ, our common Head, our spirits are then sensibly refreshed, and invigorated with new degrees of life and joy."

Reader, dost thou understand this language? Hast thou felt the power of this Christian sympathy? Or, has thy faith never yet produced these genuine sentiments of brotherly love? Then thou hast spoken as a person equally destitute of sensibility and truth, whenever thou hast dared to say, "I believe in the communion of saints."

TRAIT XVII.

HIS LOVE TO THOSE WHOSE FAITH WAS WAVERING.

WHEN a minister, after having been made instrumental in the conversion of sinners, perceives their faith decreasing, and their love growing cold, he feels for them what the Redeemer felt when he wept over Jerusalem. Not less concerned for the remissness of his believing hearers, than St. Paul was distressed by the instability of his Galatian and Corinthian converts, he pleads with them in the same affectionate terms: "Ye know," ye who are the seals of my ministry, "how I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And ye despised me not, but received me as an angel of God. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you," I tell you with sorrow, that after all my confidence in you, "I stand in doubt of you." Gal. iv. 13—20. "Our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. We beseech you," therefore, brethren, "that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." 2 Cor. vi.

This language of the Christian pastor is almost unintelligible to the minister who is merely of man's appointing. Having never converted a single soul to Christ, he has neither spiritual son nor daughter, and is entirely unac-

quainted with that painful travail which is mentioned by St. Paul. His bowels are straitened toward Christ and his members ; and, having closely united himself to the men of the world, he considers the assembly of the faithful as a company of ignorant enthusiasts. But, notwithstanding the spiritual insensibility of these ill-instructed teachers, who never studied in the school of Christ, there is no other token by which either sincere Christians or true ministers can be discerned, except that fervent love which the Galatians entertained for St. Paul before their falling away, and which that apostle ever continued to entertain for them. “By this,” saith our Lord, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John xiii. 35.

TRAIT XVIII.

HIS LOVE TO HIS COUNTRYMEN AND HIS ENEMIES.

ST. PAUL, like his rejected Master, was persecuted even to death by the Jews, his countrymen, while he generously exposed himself to innumerable hardships, in labouring for their good. These furious devotees, inspired with envy, revenge, and a persecuting zeal, hunted this apostle from place to place, as a public pest. And when the gentiles, on a certain occasion, had rescued him out of their hands, forty of the most hardened among them, engaged themselves by an oath, neither to eat nor drink, till they had assassinated him. But notwithstanding the most indubitable proofs of their bloody disposition toward him, his fervent charity threw a veil over their cruelty, and made him wish to die for his persecutors: “I declare,” saith he, “the truth in Christ, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Rom. ix. 1—3. As though he should say, “‘It is written, Cursed is every

one that hangeth on a tree ;' (Gal. iii. 13 ;) thus Christ himself became accursed for us ; and I also would lay down my life for my brethren, ' that I may have fellowship with him in his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death,' (Philip. iii. 10,) ' and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church.' " Col. i. 24. It is by expressions so charitable, and by actions which demonstrate the sincerity of those expressions, that Christians avenge themselves of their enemies, and work upon the hearts of their countrymen.

If the sentiments of every sincere disciple of Christ are expressed in the preceding language of St. Paul, how deplorable then must be the state of those Christians whose anxiety, either for their own salvation, or for that of their nearest relations, bears no proportion to that eager concern which this apostle manifested for the salvation of his bitterest persecutors ! And if good pastors feel so ardent a desire to behold all men actuated by the spirit of Christ, without excepting even their most malicious enemies, what shall we say to those ministers who never shed a single tear, nor ever breathed one ardent prayer, for the conversion of their parishioners, their friends, or their families ?

TRAIT XIX.

HIS LOVE TO THOSE WHOM HE KNEW ONLY BY REPORT.

THOUGH the true minister takes a peculiar interest in every thing that concerns the salvation of his countrymen, yet his Christian benevolence is far from being confined within the narrow limits of a particular country. He desires to bear the name of his Saviour to the ends of the earth ; and if he is not able to do this by his personal addresses, he will do it, at least, by his earnest wishes and his constant prayers. If Providence has not yet fixed him in a particular church, he writes, in the manner of St. Paul, to the inhabitants of the most distant countries ;

"I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that I" consider myself as "a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise. And, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome," where error and impiety have fixed their throne. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 13—16. If he writes to stranger-converts, whose faith is publicly spoken of in the world, he declares his sincere attachment to them, and his longing desire to afford them every spiritual assistance, in terms like these : "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers ; making request, if by any means I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established ; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." Rom. i. 9—12.

If the apostle Paul, when he knew the Romans no otherwise than by report, expressed so ardent a desire to see them, for the sole purpose of inciting them to seek after higher degrees of faith and piety, what must be the disposition of those ministers who feel no desires of this nature even for the members of their own flock ? And in how great an error are those Christians who frequently assemble together, either in their own houses, or in more public places, for the very purpose of mutually forgetting the restraints of piety, losing their time in frivolous conversation, and debasing their minds by puerile amusements ! Further : if the new nature of the regenerate excites in them that lively concern for the salvation of their neighbours, which St. Paul expressed for the salvation of those who inhabited the remotest parts of the earth, is it becoming in the faithful to stifle the motions of that commendable zeal which Christian charity alone can inspire ? And if there are to be found among us dignified teachers who, far from seconding a zeal so necessary in our day, are rather disposed to extinguish the first

sparks of it, wherever they are discernible ; whom may they be said to take for their model,—Paul the apostle, or Saul the pharisee ? Doubtless Saul, the agent of a bigoted sect, and the open persecutor of the faithful.

TRAIT XX.

HIS CHARITY TOWARD THE POOR IN GIVING OR PROCURING FOR THEM TEMPORAL RELIEF.

THOUGH our Lord came principally to save the souls of sinners, yet he was by no means unmindful of their bodies. “He went about doing good,” in the most unlimited sense ; daily relieving, with equal care, the corporeal and spiritual maladies of the people. Thus, when he had distributed the word of God to those who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, he expressed an anxious concern for the support of those among his followers who were sensible of no other wants, except such as were of a temporal nature : “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat ;” and, not content with barely expressing his concern for their corporeal necessities, he wrought an astonishing miracle for their immediate relief. Mark viii. 2. The true minister cheerfully imitates the conduct of his gracious Master, by a strict and affectionate attention to the spiritual and temporal wants of his people. “James, Cephas, and John,” saith St. Paul, “gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen : only they would that we should remember the poor ; the same which I also was forward to do.” Gal. ii. 9, 10.

When the liberality of St. Paul toward his necessitous brethren was restrained by his own excessive indigence, he employed the most effectual means to procure for them the generous benefactions of their wealthier companions in the faith of the gospel. The following passages, extracted from his epistles, may serve as sufficient proofs of this :—

“Brethren,” I cannot but inform you “of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia ; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves ; praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. Therefore, as ye abound in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. Wherefore show ye before the churches the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.” 2 Cor. viii. 1—9, 24.

Not yet content with these earnest solicitations in behalf of the poor, the apostle thus proceeds to enforce his importunities : “I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they should go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness. But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work : as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness ;” that ye may be “enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causes through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God ; while by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the

gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men." 2 Cor. ix. 5—13. Who could possibly refuse any thing to a godly minister pleading the cause of the poor, with all this apostolic dignity, simplicity, and zeal?

After having obtained alms for the poor, the apostle Paul cautiously avoided all suspicion of appropriating any part of them to the relief of his own necessities, and was equally careful that they were never misapplied through the unfaithfulness of those who were appointed to distribute them. "One of our brethren," adds the apostle, "chosen of the churches, accompanies us in our journey with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." 2 Cor. viii. 19—21. Mentioning again his favourite employment, he writes to a distant church: "Now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. Now I beseech you, brethren, that ye strive together in your prayers for me, that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that the service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints." Rom. xv. 25—31.

Thus to wait upon the churches, and, particularly, thus to attend upon the poor, is to merit the name of a faithful minister.

TRAIT XXI.

HIS CHARITY TOWARD SINNERS IN OFFERING THEM EVERY SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE.

To solicit alms for those who are destitute of food and raiment, and at the same time to withhold the word of God from those “who hunger and thirst after righteousness,” is to manifest an unhappy inconsistency of character. Such inconsistencies, however, are frequently discoverable, even among pastors, who pique themselves upon their disposition to works of benevolence and charity.

Man has an immortal soul. This soul, which is properly himself, is rendered by disobedience so totally ignorant and so completely miserable, that she seeks to enrich herself with the vanities of the world, and to gratify her inclinations with the pollutions of sin. In pity to the soul in this state of wretchedness, the truths of the gospel are proposed by a compassionate God, as a sacred remedy adapted to the nature of her innumerable wants; they illumine the blind with spiritual light and knowledge; they clothe the naked with the robe of righteousness; they feed the hungry; they heal the sick; they burst the captive's bands; they give eternal life to those who are dead in trespasses and sin; in a word, they make us partakers of the great salvation of God. To publish this gospel, then, or to procure the preaching of it to sinners, is undoubtedly to give them an important proof of the most excellent charity; while, on the other hand, to refuse them the word of God, or to avoid any occasion of administering it, is absolutely or occasionally to deny them those spiritual alms and assistances which the Saviour of the world has appointed for their daily relief. The pastor who acts in this unbecoming manner resembles a physician, or an almoner, who, having received a charge from his prince to supply the poor with food, or the sick with medicine, not only refuses to acquit himself of his acknowledged duty with diligence and impartiality, but strenuously opposes those who endea-

your to supply his lack of service. Such a minister seems to maintain a system as absurd and cruel as would be that of either of those characters just alluded to, who should pretend that no one had authority to administer alms to the poor, or medicine to the sick, except such as received pensions from the prince for that purpose; and that even these would act in a disorderly manner, if they should dare to distribute alms or remedies except on the sabbath-day, and then only during particular hours.

So long as any pastor seeks his own glory, so long he will be subject to some degree of that contemptible jealousy, which will not suffer him to behold with pleasure the more abundant and successful labours of his brethren. But the faithful minister of Christ, whose chief desire is the prosperity of the church, is actuated by a totally different spirit. Though he has a peculiar satisfaction in beholding the success of his own spiritual labours; yet, when he hears the gospel published by others, and even by such as are apparently influenced by unworthy motives, he greatly rejoices in their success. His charity, which neither envies another's prosperity, nor seeks his own particular advantage, expresses itself upon so delicate a subject in the language of St. Paul: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice." Phil. i. 15—18.

Influenced by envy, or rendered insensible by their lukewarmness, worldly ministers are absolute strangers to the generous pleasure here mentioned by the apostle; nor have they the least idea of acting in a criminal manner, when they will not permit the truths of the gospel to be freely declared by all who are disposed to announce them.

The good pastor, by whatever name he may be distinguished, lives only to publish the gospel, and to convert the souls committed to his charge; to restrain him then from attending to these important labours is to force him aside from the true end of his calling, and must appear to

every enlightened mind a greater act of cruelty, than to withhold the rich from giving alms, or to detain an expert swimmer from saving his drowning brethren. If such a pastor, in any period of his life, has acted like a monopolist of the gospel, and, by denying to the "poor in spirit," what was freely given for their support, has caused in any place a "famine of the word;" he believes himself abundantly more culpable than those avaricious merchants who, by forming a monopoly of grain in the East Indies, caused a grievous famine in that country, by which an innumerable multitude of its inhabitants perished. Those covetous men denied to the bodies of their neighbours a perishable nourishment; but he has withheld from the souls of his brethren that precious manna which might have preserved them to everlasting life. Such was the crime of those whom our Lord addressed in the following words:—"Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Matt. xxiii. 13. Observe St. Paul's sentiments of such characters. With respect to those Jews, "who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the gentiles, that they might be saved," filling up by this means the measure of their sin; "for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

If the character which the apostle here describes was odious in a Jew, without doubt it is more so in a Christian, and still doubly detestable in a minister of the gospel, whose heart should continually be animated with a fervent desire for the conversion of sinners, and the salvation of all mankind. Was it possible for those who are distinguished by this trait of the character of antichrist to discover the turpitude of their own conduct, they would acknowledge themselves abundantly more guilty than the robber who should force away from a famished pauper the morsel of bread he had begged in his distress. They would pronounce, without any hesitation, that the foster-mother who neglects the infant she has undertaken to

cherish, and prevents her charitable neighbours from affording it any nourishment, is still more excusable than the pastor who, not content with refusing to feed the flock of Christ, endeavours to scatter his sheep wherever they are found feeding, seeking out accusations against those who have led them to a refreshing pasture, and studying by every means to withdraw the gospel from those penitent sinners who, "as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby." 1 Peter ii. 2.

Happy will be the age in which Christian pastors shall no longer be found, like the scribes in the days of St. Paul, labouring to fill up the measure of their iniquities. Then truth and piety shall no longer be restrained by the fetters of prejudice and bigotry. Then the faithful shall worship God and publish the gospel, with as much freedom as the dissipated indulge themselves in the sports of the age, or the malevolent in slandering their neighbours.

TRAIT XXII.

THE ENGAGING CONDESCENSION OF HIS HUMBLE CHARITY.

CHARITY avoids all appearance of haughtiness, and is never seen to act in an unbecoming manner. On the contrary, full of courtesy, she fears lest she should give offence to any, and, full of benevolence, she labours for the edification of all. Hence the charitable pastor cannot act otherwise than with a holy condescension toward all men, and especially toward the ignorant and poor, with whom the ministers of the present age will scarcely deign to converse; and, without ever slipping his foot into the pit of error, he sometimes approaches it with a happy mixture of compassion and prudence, for the relief of those who are unable to extricate themselves from it. "Though I am free from all men," writes St. Paul, "yet I have made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the

more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are without law, as without law, that I might gain them that are without" a written "law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake." 1 Cor. ix. 19—23. "All things are lawful for me," continues he, "but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." 1 Cor. x. 23. "When ye sin against the brethren" by wounding "their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." 1 Cor. viii. 12, 13. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." 1 Cor. x. 31, 33.

Behold that sweet prudence of charity which our Lord recommended to his disciples when he pointed out the folly of putting "new wine" into such bottles as were unable to resist the force of the fermenting liquor: and of this affectionate discretion he himself gave them a striking example when he said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." If this condescending carriage was lovely in the blessed Jesus, it will ever appear amiable in his humble imitators, who can say, with the apostle Paul, to the weaker members of the church, "We have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it." 1 Cor. iii. 2.

Special care is, however, to be taken that this charitable condescension may never betray the interests of truth and virtue. "Abstain," saith St. Paul, "from all appearance of evil." 1 Thess. v. 22. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." 1 Cor. xi. 1. For "herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." Acts xxiv. 16. And "our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom,

but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward," among whom we have laboured in the Gospel. 2 Cor. i. 12.

If there exist pastors who lack this condescension toward the poor, or who are destitute of that humble charity which can familiarize itself with the most ignorant, for their edification and comfort;—if there are ministers to be found who are ever meanly complaisant to the rich, and who are void of holy resolution in the presence of the great, instead of conducting themselves with that mingled humility and dignity which are suitable to the character they sustain;—may the one and the other be convinced of the grievous error into which they are fallen, while they contemplate this opposite trait in the character of St. Paul!

Upon what consideration is founded the humiliating distinction which is generally made between the rich and the poor? Was Christ manifested in a state of earthly grandeur? Did he not chiefly associate with the poor? Far from flattering the rich, did he not insinuate that they would with the utmost difficulty enter into the kingdom of God? Did he not affirm, it were better for a man to be cast into the sea, with a mill-stone about his neck, than to offend the poorest believer? Did he not declare, that he would consider the regard shown to the meanest of his followers as though he himself had been the immediate object of it? When St. James assures us that "he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way" performs the best of all possible good works, because, by preventing a multitude of sins, he places the soul in the road to every virtue; can this declaration be supposed to lose any of its force when applied to the soul of a poor man? Are not the lowest of men immortal as the most elevated? Did not Christ humble himself to the death of the cross for the poor, as well as the rich? "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?" And, finally, were the angels less ready to convey the soul of perishing Lazarus to paradise than that of wealthy Abraham? Perish, then, for ever that unchristian prejudice which dishonours the poor, nourishes the

pride of the rich, and leads us to the violation of that great command by which we become as guilty as though we had transgressed the whole law, the spirit of which is love. And let us remember, it is only out of the ruins of so despicable a partiality that the engaging condescension, of which St. Paul has left us so lovely an example, can possibly be produced.

TRAIT XXIII.

HIS COURAGE IN DEFENCE OF OPPRESSED TRUTH.

“CHARITY rejoiceth in the truth.” 1 Cor. xiii. 6. These two amiable companions are closely united together, and mutually sustain each other. It is possible, however, when an error has the suffrages of many persons, respectable on account of their wisdom, their age, their rank, their labours, or their piety, that a sincere Christian may be tempted to sacrifice truth to authority, or rather to a mistaken charity; but the enlightened pastor, putting on the resolution of St. Paul, will never suffer himself to be imposed upon by the appearance either of persons or things; and, though he should see himself standing alone on the side of evangelical truth, he will not fear, even singly, to act as its modest and zealous defender.

In these circumstances a lukewarm minister loses all his courage. Behold his general plea for the pusillanimity of his conduct! “I am alone, and what success can I expect in so difficult an undertaking? The partisans of this error are persons whom I both love and honour. Some of them have shown me great kindness, and others have sufficient credit to prejudice the world against me. Moreover, it would be looked upon as presumption in me, who am weaker than a reed, to oppose myself to a torrent which bears down the strongest pillars of the church.” Such is the manner in which he apologizes for the timidity of his conduct in those situations where his love of truth is publicly called to the test; not considering, that to reason thus

is to forget at once the omnipotence of God, the force of truth, and the unspeakable worth of those souls which error may poison and destroy.

On the contrary, the faithful minister, who, on all occasions, rejoices in the truth, "conferring not with flesh and blood," courageously refuses to bear the yoke of any error that must evidently be accompanied with evil consequences. In the most trying situations of this nature, he imitates the conduct of the great apostle, who, when he saw a shameful error making its way into the church, placed himself in the gap, and gave way to the emotions of his honest zeal, as related in the following passage:—"False brethren came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." And "when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also," under the specious pretence of not offending his neighbour, "was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. ii. 4—14.

This reasonable reprimand is perhaps one of the greatest proofs which St. Paul ever gave of the uprightness of his intention, and the steadiness of his resolution.

Ye men of integrity! ye who have proved how much it costs to defend the rights of truth, when they stand opposed to that deference which condescending love obliges us to show, in a thousand instances, to respectable authority; you alone are able to make a proper judgment of the holy violence which was exercised by St. Paul upon this occasion. But whatever they may be called to endure in so

honourable a cause, happy are those Christians, and doubly happy those pastors, who have so great a love for truth, and so true a love for their brethren, that they are ready, at all times, with this faithful apostle, to sacrifice to the interests of the gospel every inferior consideration, every servile fear, and every worldly hope.

TRAIT XXIV

HIS PRUDENCE IN FRUSTRATING THE DESIGNS OF HIS ENEMIES.

THERE is no kind of calumny which the incredulous have not advanced, in order to render Christianity either odious or contemptible. According to the notions of these men, to adopt the maxims of evangelical patience argues a want of sensibility, and to regulate our conduct according to the dictates of Christian prudence is to act the hypocrite. What we have to say in this place will chiefly respect the latter charge.

It has been asserted by modern infidels, that the gentleness and forbearance which the gospel requires of its professors must necessarily make them the dupes of designing men, and lead them unreluctantly into the snares of their persecutors. But to draw this inference from some few passages of scripture, understood in too literal a sense, is to set truth at variance with itself, merely for the purpose of charging Christians with all the evil which it is presumed they might have avoided by prudence, or have overcome by resolution. The example of our Lord, and that of St. Paul, might have rectified the ideas of cavillers upon this point. When Christ exhorted his disciples to be "harmless as doves," he admonished them at the same time to be "wise as serpents;" and of this harmless wisdom he himself gave a striking example, when he was interrogated by the Jews respecting the lawfulness of paying tribute unto Cæsar. Well acquainted with the different sentiments of that

people with regard to the Roman yoke, without directly combating the prejudices of any party, he returned a satisfactory answer to all parties, by an inference drawn from the "image and superscription" borne upon their current coin: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Matt. xxii. 21.

The sincere Christian and the faithful minister have frequent occasion for this happy prudence, as well as St. Paul, who, more than once, employed it with success. The Jews, irritated against this apostle, sought occasion to destroy him, on account of the zeal with which he published the gospel among the gentiles. Hoping to soften the prejudices they entertained against his conduct, he recounted to them how Jesus, being raised from the dead, and appearing to him in an extraordinary manner, had expressly sent him to the gentiles; (Acts xxii. 21 ;) when the Jews, more irritated than before, would have torn him in pieces, had he not been rescued out of their hands by the Roman garrison. By this means Paul was preserved for a more peaceful hearing. And on the morrow, when he stood before the Jewish council, perceiving that the assembly was composed partly of sadducees, who say, "There is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit," and partly of pharisees, who believe equally in the existence of spirits, and the resurrection of the body, he immediately availed himself of this circumstance, and cried out, "Men and brethren, I am a pharisee, the son of a pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Acts xxiii. 6. As though he had said, "The great cause of the violent persecution that is now raised against me is, that I preach Jesus and the resurrection. Our fathers, indeed, were not absolutely assured of a life to come; but the important doctrine of the resurrection, and of the judgment that shall follow, is now demonstrated, since God has given an incontestable proof of it, in raising up his Son Jesus from the dead. And I myself have been an eye-witness of his resurrection, to whom he has appeared two several times, once as I journeyed to Damascus, and afterwards as I prayed in

the temple. But when I mentioned this second appearance of a risen Saviour, my incredulous accusers began vehemently to cry out, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth!'" By this just exposition of the fact, and by his prudent selection of the resurrection of Christ from among the other great doctrines of Christianity, St. Paul happily caused a division to take place among his judges. The event answered his expectation: "the scribes that were of the pharisees' part arose saying, We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit," that is, a man risen from the dead, "or an angel, hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." Acts xxiii. 9. There is still another instance of the wisdom of the serpent reconciling itself with the innocence of the dove in the conduct of this apostle, when, marking the disposition of his Athenian judges, he took advantage of their taste for novelty, by announcing to them "the unknown God," to whom they had already erected an altar. Acts xvii.

This Christian prudence, equally distant from the duplicity of hypocrites, and the stupidity of idiots, merits a place among the traits which characterize this great apostle, not only because it is worthy of our imitation, but also because it has been indirectly represented, by a modern Celsus, as mere cunning and artifice. The author here alluded to, who deserves rather to be called a great poet, than a faithful painter, having disfigured this trait of St. Paul's character with a pencil dipped in the gall of prejudice, we gladly take this occasion of setting forth the injustice of his imputations, so illiberally cast both upon Christianity itself, and the most eminent of its defenders. This witty philosopher, who has said so many good things against the spirit of persecution, never perceived that he himself was actuated by an intolerant spirit: so true it is, that the most sagacious are liable to be blinded by passion or prejudice. The same spirit of persecution which excited the Athenians to discountenance the justice of Aristides as a dangerous singularity, and to punish the piety of Socrates as a species of atheism, led the author of the Philosophical Dictionary to represent the prudence of St. Paul as the duplicity of an hypocrite.

Had this severe judge occupied the seat of Ananias, he might, perhaps, with an affected liberality, have overlooked the peculiarities of the apostle's creed; but, in the end, his innate detestation of piety would have assisted him, according to the general custom of persecutors, to feign some just cause for treating him with the utmost rigour. And this he has done in our day, as far as his circumstances would permit; since, not being able to disgrace him by the hand of a public executioner, he has studied to do it with his pen, by ravishing from him, not only his reputation for extraordinary piety, but even his claim to common honesty.

Persecutor, whoever thou art, be content that thy predecessors have taken away the lives of the righteous, and spare them what they prefer infinitely before life itself,—“the testimony of a good conscience.”

TRAIT XXV

HIS TENDERNESS TOWARD OTHERS, AND HIS SEVERITY TOWARD HIMSELF.

THOUGH perfectly insensible to the warm emotions of brotherly love, the worldly pastor frequently repeats, in his public discourses, those affectionate expressions which flow so cordially from the lips of faithful ministers, “My dear brethren in Christ.” These expressions from the pulpit are almost unavoidable upon some occasions; but, in general, they are to be regarded in no other light than the civil addresses of a haughty person, who concludes his epistles by assuring his correspondents that he considers it an honour to subscribe himself their obedient servant. But while the worldly minister affects a degree of benevolence which he cannot feel, the good pastor, out of the abundance of a heart overflowing with Christian charity, addresses his brethren with the utmost affection and regard, not only without any danger of feigning what he has not experienced, but even without a possibility of

expressing the ardour of his brotherly love. His exhortations to the faithful, like those of St. Paul, are seasoned with an unction of grace, and accompanied with a flow of tenderness, which frequently give them an astonishing effect upon his brethren, and which always evince the interest he takes in the concerns of the church. "Rebuke not an elder," says St. Paul, "but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity." 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. Such was the exhortation of this apostle to a young minister; nor was his example unsuitable to his counsel. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. Dearly beloved, be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. xii. 1, 19, 21. "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you." 1 Cor. iv. 14. "I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Eph. iv. 1. "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, being of one accord. My beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Phil. ii. 1, 2, 12. "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." 1 Thess. iv. 1. "Though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: who in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord." Philemon 8—12, 20. Such was the tenderness and affection with which St. Paul was accustomed to address his believing brethren. But the language of this apostle was very different when he spoke of himself, and

of that body of sin which constrained him to cry out, "O wretched man that I am!"

It is the character of too many persons to be severe toward the failings of others, while they show the utmost lenity toward themselves, with respect both to their infirmities and their vices. Always ready to place the faults of their neighbours in an odious light, and their own in the most favourable point of view, they seem to be made up of nothing but partiality and self-love, while the true minister reserves his greatest indulgence for others, and exercises the greatest severity toward himself. "All things are lawful for me," writes St. Paul, "but I will not be brought under the power of any." 1 Cor. vi. 12. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? And every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. ix. 24—27.

One reflection naturally finishes this trait of the character of St. Paul. If this spiritual man, if this great apostle, thought himself obliged to use such strenuous efforts that he might not be rejected before God at the last, in how great danger are those careless pastors and Christians who, far from accustoming themselves to holy acts of self-denial, satisfy their natural desires without any apprehension, and treat those as enthusiasts who begin to imitate St. Paul, by regarding their baptismal vow, and renouncing their sensual appetites!

TRAIT XXVI.

HIS LOVE NEVER DEGENERATED INTO COWARDICE, BUT
REPROVED AND CONSOLED AS OCCASION REQUIRED.

THE charity of the true minister bears no resemblance to that phantom of a virtue, that mean complaisance, that unmanly pliancy, that unchristian cowardice, or that affected generosity, which the ministers of this day delight to honour with the name of "charity." According to these insufficient judges, to be charitable is only to give some trifling alms out of our abundant superfluities, to tolerate the most dangerous errors without daring to lift up the standard of truth, and to behold the overflowings of vice without attempting to oppose the threatening torrent. Such would be the mistaken charity of a surgeon, who, to spare the mortifying arm of his friend, should suffer the gangrene to spread over his whole body. Such was the charity of the high priest Eli toward Hophni and Phinehas,—an impious charity, which permitted him to behold their shameful debaucheries with too favourable an eye,—a fatal charity, which opened that abyss of evil which finally swallowed them up, and into which they dragged with them their father, their children, the people of Israel, and the church over which they had been appointed to preside.

The good pastor, conscious that he shall save a soul from death, if he can but prevail with a sinner to forsake his evil way, uses every effort to accomplish so important a work. And, among other probable means which he employs on this occasion, he tries the force of severe reprehension, rebuking the wicked with a holy authority; and, if it be necessary, returning to the charge with a spark of that glowing zeal with which his Master was influenced, when he forced from the temple those infamous buyers and sellers who had profaned it with their carnal merchandise. Thus St. Paul, on receiving information that scandalous errors had been discovered in the conduct of a member of the Corinthian church, immedi-

ately wrote to that church in the following severe and solemn manner: "It is reported that there is fornication among you. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. Know ye not, that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and that the plague in any single member of a society is sufficient to infect the whole company? "Purge out therefore the old leaven, and put away from among yourselves that wicked person. If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, keep not company with such a one, no, not to eat. Be not deceived: fornicators shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Flee fornication," therefore, and avoid the company of fornicators. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Further: "I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already concerning" the lascivious person that is among you, "to deliver such a one unto satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. v., vi.

When the true minister has passed the severest censures upon sinners, and beholds those censures attended with the desired effect, he turns to the persons he lately rebuked, with testimonies of that unbounded charity that "beareth all things," and "hopeth all things." More ready, if possible, to relieve the dejected, than to humble the presumptuous, after having manifested the courage of a lion, he puts on the gentleness of a lamb, consoling and encouraging the penitent offender, and never ceasing to intercede for him, till his pardon is obtained both from God and man. Thus St. Paul, who had so sharply rebuked the Corinthians in his first epistle, gave them abundant consolation in his second, and exhorted them to receive with kindness the person whom he had before enjoined them to excommunicate. It is easy to recognise the tenderness of Christ, in the following language of this benevolent apostle: "I wrote unto you" my first epistle "out of much affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the

love which I have more abundantly unto you." 2 Cor. ii. 4. "Great is my glorying of you; I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. God, that comforteth them that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus," my messenger, "when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, and your fervent mind toward me. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner. For behold what carefulness it wrought in you, what clearing of yourselves, what" holy "indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what revenge. In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." Moreover "we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, and how you received him," together with my reproof, "with fear and trembling. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things." 2 Cor. vii. And with respect to the person who has caused us so much distress, "sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that" now "ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also;" nay, I have already forgiven him, for your sakes, as in the presence of Christ. 2 Cor. ii. 6—10.

Great God, appoint over thy flock vigilant, charitable, and courageous pastors, who may discern the sinner through all his deceitful appearances, and separate him from thy peaceful fold, whether he be an unclean goat, or a ravenous wolf. Permit not thy ministers to confound the just with the unjust, rendering contemptible the most sacred mysteries, by admitting to them persons with whom virtuous heathens would blush to converse. Touch the hearts of those pastors who harden thy rebellious

people, by holding out tokens of thy favour to those who are the objects of thy wrath; and permit no longer the bread of life, which they carelessly distribute to all who choose to profane it, to become in their unhallowed hands the bread of death. Discover to them the impiety of offering their holy things to the dogs; and awaken in them a holy fear of becoming accomplices with those hypocritical monsters who press into thy temple to crucify thy Son afresh, and who, by a constant profanation of the symbols of our holy faith, add to their other abominations the execrable act of eating and drinking their own damnation, with as much composure as some among them swallow down the intoxicating draught, or utter the most impious blasphemies.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

BEFORE we proceed to the consideration of another trait of the character of St. Paul, it will be necessary to refute an objection to which the preceding trait may appear liable: "Dare you," it may be asked, "propose to us as a model a man who could strike Elymas with blindness, and deliver up to satan the body of a sinner?"

ANSWER.—The excellent motive and the happy success of the apostle's conduct in both these instances entirely justify him. He considered affliction not only as the crucible in which God is frequently pleased to purify the just, but as the last remedy to be employed for the restoration of obstinate sinners. Behold the reason why the charity of the primitive church demanded, in behalf of God, that the rod should not be spared, when the impiety of men was no longer able to be restrained by gentler means, determining that it was far better to be brought to repentance even by the sharpest sufferings, than to live and die in a sinful state. To exercise this high degree of holy and charitable severity toward a sinner was, in some mysterious manner, to deliver up his body to satan, who was looked upon as the executioner of God's righteous vengeance in criminal cases. Thus satan destroyed the first-born of Egypt, smote the subjects of David with the pestilence, and cut off the vast

army of Sennacherib. St. John has thrown some light upon this profound mystery, by asserting, "There is a sin unto death;" (1 John v. 16;) and the case of Ahab is fully in point; for when that king had committed this sin, a spirit of error received immediate orders to lead him forth to execution upon the plains of Ramoth-Gilead. 1 Kings xxii. 20, 22. This awful doctrine is further confirmed by St. Luke, when he relates, that in the same instant when the people, in honour of Herod, "gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man, the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten up of worms, and gave up the ghost." Acts xii. 22, 23. The punishment thus inflicted by the immediate order of God was always proportioned to the nature of the offence. If the sin was not unto death, it was followed by some temporary affliction, as in the cases of Elymas and the incestuous Corinthian. If the crime committed was of such a nature that the death of the sinner became necessary, either for the salvation of his soul, for the reparation of his crime, or to alarm those who might probably be corrupted by his pernicious example, he was then either smitten with some incurable disease, as in the case of Herod, or struck with immediate death, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, who sought to veil their hypocrisy with appearances of piety, and their double-dealing with a lie. Had M. Voltaire considered the Christian church as a well-regulated species of theocracy, he would have seen the folly of his whole reasoning, with respect to the authority of that church in its primitive state. And, convinced that God has a much greater right to pronounce by his ministers a just sentence of corporeal punishment, and even death itself, than any temporal prince can claim to pronounce such sentence by his officers, that daring philosopher, instead of pointing his sarcasms against an institution so reasonable and holy, would have been constrained to tremble before the Judge of all the earth.

Finally: it is to be observed, that when this kind of jurisdiction was exercised in the church, the followers of Christ, not having any magistrates of their own reli-

gion, lived altogether under the government of heathenish rulers, who frequently tolerated those very crimes which were peculiarly offensive to the pure spirit of the gospel. And on this account God was pleased to permit the most eminent among his people, on some extraordinary occasions, to exercise that terrible power, which humbled the offending church of Corinth, and overthrew the sorcerer Elymas in his wicked career. If it be inquired, "What would become of mankind, were the clergy of this day possessed of the extraordinary power of St. Paul?" we answer: The terrible manner in which St. Paul sometimes exercised the authority he had received, with respect to impenitent sinners, is not left as an example to the ecclesiastics of the present day, unless they should come (which is almost impossible) into similar circumstances, and attain to equal degrees of discernment, faith, and charity with this apostle himself.

TRAIT XXVII.

HIS PERFECT DISINTERESTEDNESS.

IF "charity seeketh not her own," and if it is required that the "conversation" of the faithful should "be without covetousness," it becomes the true minister, in an especial manner, to maintain an upright and disinterested conduct in the world.

Though it be true, that "they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar," yet nothing is so detestable to the faithful pastor as the idea of enriching himself with the sacred spoils of that altar. Observe how St. Paul expresses himself upon this subject: "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Having," therefore, "food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition. For the

love of money is the root of all evil : which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God," who art set apart as a minister of the everlasting gospel, "flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." 1 Tim. vi. 7—11. With regard to myself, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Phil. iv. 11, 12. "Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness. For ye remember our labour and travail, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you. Ye are our witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." 1 Thess. ii. 5, 9, 10. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." 2 Cor. xii. 14, 15. Behold the disinterestedness of the faithful shepherd, who is ever less ready to receive food and clothing from the flock, than to labour for its protection and support. Behold the spirit of Christ! And let the pastor who is influenced by a different spirit draw that alarming inference from his state which he is taught to do by the following expression of St. Paul:—"If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9.

Happy would be the Christian church were it blessed with disinterested pastors! Avaricious ministers, who are more taken up with the concerns of earth than with the things of heaven, who are more disposed to enrich their families than to supply the necessities of the poor, who are more eager to multiply their benefices or to augment their salaries, than to improve their talents and increase the number of the faithful; such ministers, instead of benefiting the church, harden the impenitent, aggravate their own condemnation, and force infidels to believe

that the holy ministry is used, by the generality of its professors, as a comfortable means of securing to themselves the perishable bread, if not the fading honours, of the present life.

TRAIT XXVIII.

HIS CONDESCENSION IN LABOURING, AT TIMES, WITH HIS OWN HANDS, THAT HE MIGHT PREACH INDUSTRY BY EXAMPLE, AS WELL AS BY PRECEPT.

SUCH is the disinterestedness of the true minister, that though he might claim a subsistence from the sacred office to which he has been solemnly consecrated, yet he generously chooses to sacrifice his rights when he cannot enjoy them without giving some occasion for reproach. To supply his daily wants, he is not ashamed to labour with his own hands, when he is called to publish the gospel, either among the poor, or in those countries where the law has not appointed him a maintenance, as among heathen nations and savage tribes; nor will he refuse to do this when his lot falls among a slothful people, animating them to diligence in their several vocations by his prudent condescension, that the gospel may not be blamed. In such circumstances, if his own patrimony is insufficient for his support, no disciple of Jesus will blush to follow the example of St. Paul, who gives the following representation of his own conduct in cases of a like nature:—
 “Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that you might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? When I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. But that I may cut off occasion from them that desire occasion,” and who would not fail to represent

me as a self-interested person, were they able to charge me with the enjoyment of my just rights among you. 2 Cor. xi. 7—12. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts xx. 33—35. "Ye know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies." 2 Thess. iii. 7—11. Happy were those times of Christian simplicity, when the apostles of Christ thought it no disgrace to follow some useful occupation, for the relief of their temporal necessities; when, instead of eating the bread of idleness, they cast their nets alternately for fishes and for men; when they quitted the tabernacles in which they were wont to labour, for the sacred recreation of setting before sinners "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Of how much greater value were the nets of St. Peter, than dogs of the chase; and the working implements of St. Paul, than those tables of play, at which many of his unworthy successors are now seeking amusement!

But notwithstanding all the circumspection and prudence of the faithful pastor, even though he should think it necessary to preach industry by example, as well as by precept; yet if his exhortations are more frequent than those of his lukewarm brethren, he will be reproached by the irreligious part of the world, as an indirect advocate for indolence. The enemies of piety and truth are still ready to renew the old objection of Pharaoh against the

service of God :—" Wherefore do ye let the people from their works ? The people of the land are many, and you make them rest from their burdens. They be idle ; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men ; and let them not regard vain words." Exodus v. 4—9. Such is the erroneous judgment which is generally formed respecting the most zealous servants of God ; but while they feel the bitterness of these unmerited reproaches, they draw more abundant consolation from the encouraging language of their gracious Master :—" Blessed are ye, when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matt. v. 11, 12.

The declared adversaries of religion are not, however, the only persons who accuse a laborious minister of diverting the people from their business by the too frequent returns of public exhortation and prayer : there are others, not wholly destitute of piety, who frequently add weight to these unjust accusations. Such are the half-converted, who, not yet understanding the inestimable worth of that bread which nourisheth the soul to everlasting life, are chiefly engaged in labouring for the bread which perisheth. Men of this character, engaging themselves in a vast variety of earthly concerns, incessantly " disquiet themselves in vain," and consider those hours as running to waste in which a zealous pastor detains them from worldly cares and frivolous enjoyments. While he is engaged in teaching that " one thing " only " is " absolutely " needful," they are gasping at every apparent good that solicits their affections ; and while he is insisting upon the necessity of choosing " that good part which shall not be taken away," these formal professors are ready to reason with him, as Martha with Jesus : Dost thou not know how greatly we are cumbered with a multiplicity of vexatious concerns ; and " carest thou not " that our assistants and dependents are detained from their necessary avocations by an indolent attendance upon thy ministry ?

These false sentiments with respect both to the ministers and the word of God, which too generally prevail among nominal Christians, have their source in that direct opposition which must always subsist between the grand maxim of the children of God, and the distinguishing principle of worldly men: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," saith the blessed Jesus; "and all these things" which are further necessary to your welfare "shall be added unto you." Matt. vi. 33. "No," replies the prince of this world; "seek ye first the enjoyments of time and sense, and all other things that are needful to your well-being shall be added over and above." From these two opposite principles results that entire contrariety which has been observed in all ages between those who are laying up treasures upon earth, and those who have set their affections upon things that are above. Happy are the faithful, and doubly happy the pastors, who, constantly imitating the great apostle, according to their several vocations, pray and labour at the same time both for their daily bread and the bread of eternal life! In thus observing the twofold command of Moses and of Christ, some reasonable hope may be entertained, that their good works will at length overcome the aversion of their enemies, as those of the first Christians overcame the deep-rooted prejudices of the heathen world.

TRAIT XXIX.

THE RESPECT HE MANIFESTED FOR THE HOLY ESTATE OF
MATRIMONY, WHILE CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE ENGAGED
HIM TO LIVE IN A STATE OF CELIBACY.

SOME ministers have carried their disinterestedness to so high a pitch, that they have refused to enter into the marriage state merely with this view, that, being free from all superfluous care and expense, they might consecrate their persons more entirely to the Lord, and their possessions less reservedly to the support of the poor, whom

they considered as their children, and adopted their heirs. But all pastors are not called to follow these rare examples of abstinence and disinterested piety.

When we examine into the life of a celebrated man, we generally inquire whether he passed his days in a state of marriage or celibacy, and what it was that determined his choice to the one or the other of these states. Such an inquiry is peculiarly necessary with respect to St. Paul, as many of the faithful, in the earliest ages of the church, deluded by the amiable appearance of celibacy, embraced the monastic life,—a state to which the clergy and the religious of the Romish church still dedicate themselves; whence those disgraceful accusations which divers philosophers have preferred against the Christian religion, as destructive of society in its very origin, the conjugal bond. But, leaving the reveries of legend, if we seek for Christianity in the pure gospel of Christ, we shall find this accusation to be totally groundless; since one view of the Christian legislator in publishing that gospel was to strengthen the nuptial tie by declaring, that an immodest glance is a species of adultery, by revoking the permission formerly given to the husband to put away his wife for any temporary cause of dissatisfaction, and by absolutely forbidding divorce, except in cases of adultery. Matt. v. 28, 32. Nay, so far did this divine Lawgiver carry his condescension in honour of the marriage state, that he was present at one of those solemn feasts which were usually held upon such occasions, attended by the holy virgin and his twelve disciples; and, not content with giving this public testimony of his respect for so honourable an institution, he accompanied it with the first miraculous proof of his almighty power.

St. Paul, it is true, passed the whole of his life in a state of celibacy; but he never enjoined that state to any person; and if he occasionally recommended it to some, to whom it was indifferent whether they married or not, it was chiefly on account of the distress and persecution of those times. 1 Cor. vii. 26. To engage the most pious persons ordinarily to live in a state of celibacy is not less contrary to nature and reason, than to the spirit of the gospel.

This is to oppose the propagation of the best Christians and the most faithful subjects ; it is to suppose, that those persons who join example to precept in the cause of virtue, and who, on that very account, are peculiarly qualified for the education of children, are the only persons in the world who ought to have none. The absurdity of this opinion constrained the apostle Paul publicly to combat it, by declaring to the Hebrews, that "marriage, and the bed undefiled, are honourable among all men." Heb. xiii. 4. He further affirmed, that "a bishop must be the husband of one wife, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4. And if he wished the Corinthians to continue in the state which he himself had chosen, on account of the peculiar advantages accruing from it at that season to the persecuted members of the Christian church ; "nevertheless, to avoid fornication," he counselled, that "every man should have his own wife," and "every woman her own husband." 1 Cor. vii. 2. "I will," saith he to Timothy, "that the younger women marry, bear children, and guide the house." 1 Tim. v. 14. And lastly, he cautioned the same Christian bishop against the error of those who, in the last times, should "depart from the faith, giving heed to the doctrines of devils," and "forbidding to marry ;" earnestly exhorting his young successor to guard the brethren against a doctrine so fatal to the church in particular, and so destructive of society in general. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 6.

But it may be urged, if St. Paul really entertained such high ideas of the marriage state, and represented it as the most perfect emblem of that strict union which subsists betwixt Christ and his church, why did he not recommend it by his example ? I answer : Although St. Paul was never married, yet he expressly asserted his right to that privilege as well as St. Peter and some others of the apostles ; (1 Cor. ix. 5 ;) intimating, at the same time, that prudence and charity inclined him to forego his right in that respect. When a man is perpetually called to travel from place to place, prudence requires that he should not encumber himself with those domestic cares which must

occasion many unavoidable delays in the prosecution of his business ; or, if he derives his maintenance from the generosity of the poor, charity should constrain him to burden them as little as possible. This zealous apostle could not prevail upon himself to expose a woman and children to those innumerable dangers which he was constantly obliged to encounter. The first peril from which he made his escape was that which compelled him to descend from the wall of Damascus in a basket : now, if a family had shared with him the same danger, what an addition would they have made to his affliction and his care ! Is it not evident, that, in such circumstances, every man who is not obliged to marry from reasons either physical or moral, is called to imitate the example of this disinterested apostle from the same motives of prudence and charity ? This indefatigable preacher, always on a mission, judged it advisable to continue in a single state to the end of his days ; but, had he been fixed in a particular church, had he there felt how much it concerns a minister neither to tempt others, nor be tempted himself ; and had he known how much assistance a modest, provident, and pious woman is capable of affording a pastor by inspecting the women of his flock ; he would then probably have advised every resident pastor to enter into the marriage state, provided they should fix upon regenerate persons capable of edifying the church, in imitation of Phebe, a deaconess of Cenchrea, and Persis, who was so dear to St. Paul on account of her labours in the Lord ; (Rom. xvi. 1, 12 ;) or copying the example of those four virgins, the daughters of Philip, who edified, exhorted, and consoled the faithful by their pious discourses. Acts xxi. 9. *

* The attention of ministers in choosing such companions as may not hinder their success in the ministry, is of so great importance that, in some countries, the conduct of a pastor's wife, as well as that of the pastor himself, is supposed either to edify or mislead the flock. Nay, the minister himself is frequently condemned for the faults of his wife : thus, in the protestant churches of Hungary, they degrade a pastor whose wife indulges herself in cards, dancing, or any other public amusement which bespeaks the gaiety of a lover of the world rather than the gravity of a Christian matron. This severity springs from the supposition, that the woman, having promised obedience to her husband,

The Christian doctrine on this point may be reduced to the following heads:—1. In times of great trouble and grievous persecutions, the followers of Christ should abstain from marriage, unless obliged thereto by particular and powerful reasons. Matthew xxiv. 19. 2. The faithful who mean to embrace the nuptial state should be careful on no account to connect themselves with any persons, except such as are remarkable for their seriousness and piety. 2 Cor. vi. 14. 3. If a man is married before he is converted, or if, being converted, he is deceived in choosing a woman whom he supposed to be pious, but discovers to be worldly, instead of separating himself from his wife in either of these cases, he is rather called to give all diligence in bringing her acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus. 1 Cor. vii. 16. 4. Missionaries ought not to marry, unless there be an absolute necessity. 5. A bishop or resident pastor is usually called to the marriage state. 1 Tim. iii. 12; Titus i. 6. Lastly: a minister of the gospel who is able to live in a state of celibacy “for the kingdom of heaven’s sake,” that he may have no other care except that of preaching the gospel, and attending upon the members of Christ’s mystical body, such a one is undoubtedly called to continue in a single state. For, having obtained the gift of continence, he is dispensed from carnally giving children to the church, because he begets her spiritual sons and daughters; and such a one, instead of being honoured as the head of a parti-

can do nothing but what he either directs or approves. Hence they conclude, that example having a greater influence than precept, the wife of a minister, if she is inclined to the world, will preach worldly compliance with more success by her conduct, than her husband can preach the renunciation of the world by the most solemn discourses. And the incredulity of the stumbled flock will always be the consequence of that unhappy inconsistency which is observable between the serious instructions of a well-disposed minister and the trifling conduct of a woman with whom he is so intimately connected. Nor are there wanting apostolic ordinances sufficient to support the exercise of this severe discipline: “Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.” Let the bishop or deacon be “one that ruleth well his own house, having his children,” and every part of his family, “in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, 11.

cular household, should be counted worthy of double honour, as a spiritual father in his Lord's family. Matt. xix. 12.

TRAIT XXX.

THE ARDOUR OF HIS LOVE.

THE passions are the springs by which we are usually actuated. Reason alone is too weak to put us in motion so often as duty requires ; but when love, that sacred passion of the faithful, comes in to its assistance, we are then sweetly constrained to act in conformity to the various relations we sustain in civil and religious life. Thus the God of nature has rooted in the hearts of mothers a fond affection which keeps them anxiously attentive to the wants of their children ; and thus the Spirit of God implants in the bosom of a good pastor that ardent charity which excites him to watch over his flock with the most affectionate and unwearied attention. The love of a father to his son, the attachment of a nurse to her foster-child, the tender affection of a mother to her infant, are so many emblems employed in the holy scriptures to set forth the sweetness and ardour of that Christian love which animates the true minister to the performance of his several duties. " You know," says St. Paul, " how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children. We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children ; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8, 11. " God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." Philip. i. 8. " Receive us, for ye are in our hearts to die and live with you." 2 Cor. vii. 2, 3. Worldly pastors can form no idea of that ardent charity which dictates such benevolent language, and accompanies it with actions which demonstrate its sincerity. This is one of those mysterious things which are perfectly incom-

prehensible to the natural man, and which frequently appear to him as the extremest folly. This fervent love improves us into new creatures, by the sweet influence it maintains over all our tempers; this holy passion deeply interests the faithful pastor in the concerns of his fellow-Christians, and teaches him to rejoice in the benefits they receive, as though his own prosperity was inseparably connected with theirs. "I thank my God," writes the great apostle to the benefactor of his brethren, "making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother." Philemon 4—7. The sorrow and the joy of this zealous imitator of Christ were generally influenced by the varying states of the faithful. When any who had once run well were seen loitering by the way, or starting aside from the path of life, he expressed the most sincere affliction on their account:—there are some, "of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Phil. iii. 18. On the other hand, the progress of believers was as marrow to his bones, and as the balsam of life to his heart: "We are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection." 2 Cor. xiii. 9. "My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Philippians iv. 1; ii. 15, 16.

Reader, whoever thou art, permit me to ask thee one important question. Art thou acquainted with that ardent charity that influenced the apostle Paul? If his Christian love was like a rapid and deep river, is thine, at least, like a running stream whose waters fail not?

Do thy joys and thy sorrows flow in the same channel, and tend to the same point, as the sanctified passions of this benevolent man? Relate the chief causes of thy satisfaction and thy displeasure, and I will tell thee whether, like Demas, thou art a child of this present world, or a fellow-citizen of heaven, with St. Paul.*

TRAIT XXXI.

HIS GENEROUS FEARS AND SUCCEEDING CONSOLATIONS.

WHEN the church is threatened with a storm, the worldly pastor has no fears, except for himself and his relations; but the true minister, if he is at all disquieted with fear, when the Lord's vessel is driven with the winds, or appears to be in danger through the indiscreet conduct of false or unloving brethren, he feels much less for his own safety, than for the security of his companions in tribulation. He fears especially for the weak of the flock, and for those of the faithful who are exposed to violent temptation; and these generous fears, which equally prove his holy zeal and his brotherly love, without robbing him of all his joy, afford him frequent opportunities of exercising his faith, his resignation, and his hope. "We were troubled," saith St. Paul, "on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would." 2 Cor. vii. 5; xi. 3; xii. 20. "When we could no longer forbear, we sent Timothy to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed there-

* Have you more joy when your preaching augments your income, than when you observe a wandering sheep conducted into the right way? Then conclude, that you preach more for mammon than for Christ.—*M. ROGUES.*

unto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before, that we should suffer tribulation ; even as it came to pass. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain." 1 Thess. iii. 1—5.

Though these "fightings without," and these "fears within," are always painful to the flesh, yet they are as constantly beneficial to the soul. If they subject the true minister for a season to the keenest affliction, they prepare him in the end for "strong consolation." Observe the manner in which the great apostle expresses himself upon this point. "We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead : who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver : in whom we trust that he will not yet deliver us." 2 Cor. i. 8—10. "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel ; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places ; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." Phil. i. 12—14. Hence, "we glory in tribulations : knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Rom. v. 3—5. "Blessed be God, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort ; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor. i. 3—5.

If those who are honoured with a commission to publish the gospel were fully convinced how gracious and

powerful a Master they serve, instead of being alarmed at the sight of those labours and dangers which await them in the exercise of their ministry, they would stand prepared to run all hazards in his service; as courageous soldiers, who fight under the eye of a generous prince, are ready to expose their lives for the augmentation of his glory. Can it become good pastors to manifest less concern for the salvation of their brethren, than mercenary warriors for the destruction of their prince's foes? And if the Romans generously exposed themselves to death, in preserving the life of a fellow-citizen, for the trifling reward of a civic wreath, how much greater magnanimity should a Christian pastor discover in rescuing the souls of his brethren from a state of perdition, for the glorious reward of a never-fading crown?

TRAIT XXXII.

THE GRAND SUBJECT OF HIS GLORYING, AND THE EVANGELICAL MANNER IN WHICH HE MAINTAINED HIS SUPERIORITY OVER FALSE APOSTLES.

THE disposition of a faithful pastor is, in every respect, diametrically opposite to that of a worldly minister. If you observe the conversation of an ecclesiastic who is influenced by the spirit of the world, you will hear him intimating either that he has, or that he would not be sorry to have, the precedence among his brethren, to live in a state of affluence and splendour, and to secure to himself such distinguished appointments as would increase both his dignity and his income, without making any extraordinary addition to his pastoral labours; you will find him anxious to be admitted into the best companies, and occasionally forming parties for the chase or some other vain amusement: while the true pastor cries out in the self-renouncing language of the great apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord

Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. vi. 14.

If the minister who is really formed to preside in the church was singled out from among his brethren, and placed in an apostolic chair, he would become the more humble for his exaltation : if such a one was slighted and vilified by false apostles, he would not appeal, for the honour of his character, to the superiority of his talents, his rank, or his mission ; but rather to the superiority of his labours, his dangers, and his sufferings. Thus, at least, St. Paul defended the dignity of his character against the unjust insinuations of his adversaries in the ministry : " Are they ministers of Christ ? (I speak as a fool) I am more." But in what manner did he attempt to prove this ? Was it by saying, " I have a richer benefice than the generality of ministers ; I am a doctor, a professor of divinity ; I bear the mitre, and dwell in an episcopal palace ?" No : instead of this, he used the following apostolic language :—" In labours I am more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft ; in journeyings often, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils by the heathen, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak ? who is offended and I burn not ? If I must needs glory, I will glory in the things which concern mine infirmities." 2 Cor. xi. 23—30. " From henceforth let no man trouble me : for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Gal. vi. 17. Such are the appeals of holy prelates. But for a man to glory in having obtained a deanery, a professor's chair, or a bishopric, is in reality to boast of his unfaithfulness to his vocation, and to prove himself unworthy of the rank to which he has been injudiciously raised.

Ye who preside over the household of God, learn of the apostle Paul to manifest your real superiority. Surpass your inferiors in humility, in charity, in zeal, in your

painful labours for the salvation of sinners, in your invincible courage to encounter those dangers which threaten your brethren, and by your unwearied patience in bearing those persecutions which the faithful disciples of Christ are perpetually called to endure from a corrupt world. Thus shall you honourably replace the first Christian prelates, and happily restore the church to its primitive dignity.

TRAIT XXXIII.

HIS PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE UNDER THE SEVEREST TRIALS.

“CHARITY is not easily provoked ;” but, on the contrary, “thinketh no evil.” Full of patience and meekness, Christ distinguished himself by his abundant love to those from whom he received the most cruel treatment. Thus also the ministers of Christ are distinguished, who, as they are more or less courageous and indefatigable in the work of the ministry, are enabled to adopt the following declaration of St. Paul with more or less propriety :— “Being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it ; being defamed, we entreat ; we are made as the filth of the world, and are as the off-scouring of all things unto this day.” 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. “Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed ; but in all things approving ourselves, as the ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings ; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,” which enables us to attack error and vice, while it shields us from their assaults ; “by honour and dishonour ; by evil report and good report ; as deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown, and yet well known ; as dying, and,

behold, we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." 2 Cor. vi. 3—10.

Far from being discouraged by the trials which befall him, the true minister is disposed, in such circumstances, to pray with the greater fervency ; and according to the ardour and constancy of his prayer, such are the degrees of fortitude and patience to which he attains. "We have not received," saith St. Paul, "the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself," amid all our distresses, "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 15, 16, 26. "I besought the Lord thrice that" this trial "might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Cor. xii. 8—10. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. iv. 13.

What an advantage, what an honour, is it to labour in the service of so gracious and powerful a Master ! By the power with which he controls the world he overrules all things "for good to them that love" him. Their most pungent sorrows are succeeded by peculiar consolations ; the reproach of the cross prepares them for the honours of a crown ; and the flames in which they are sometimes seen to blaze become like that chariot of fire which conveyed Elijah triumphantly away from the fury of Jezebel.

TRAIT XXXIV

HIS MODEST FIRMNESS BEFORE MAGISTRATES.

SUPPORTED by a strong persuasion that God and truth are on his side, the faithful minister is carried above all those disheartening fears which agitate the hearts of worldly pastors. Depending upon the truth of that solemn prediction, "They will deliver you up to the council, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the gentiles," he expects, in times of persecution, to appear before magistrates, and possibly before kings, for the cause of Christ and his gospel. Nor is he afflicted at such a prospect. Relying on the promise of that compassionate Redeemer who once appeared for him before Annas and Caiaphas, Herod and Pontius Pilate, without anxiously premeditating what he shall answer, and resting assured that wisdom shall be given him in every time of need, he cries out, with the holy determination of the Psalmist, "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." Psalm cxix. 46.

When he is brought as a malefactor before the judge, while his accusers, actuated by malicious zeal, agree to say, "We have found this man a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition among the people," and one of the ringleaders of a new and dangerous sect, he justifies himself by answering, "The witnesses who appear against me this day, neither found me trampling under foot the authority of my superiors, nor sowing the seeds of sedition among the people; neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." And supposing his accusers are not only deists, but professors of the Christian faith, he will add, "This also I confess, that in conformity to those

principles which pretended philosophers term 'superstitious,' and which lukewarm Christians call 'enthusiastic; 'I believe,' not only 'in God the Father Almighty,' but also in 'Jesus Christ his only Son,' whom I acknowledge to be 'King of kings, and Lord of lords,' and who, after having suffered for our sins, rose again for our justification. Further: I joyfully subscribe to that confession of faith which is frequently in your own mouths, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost,' who regenerates and sanctifies every true member of the holy catholic church; and I participate with those members the common advantages of our most holy faith, which are, an humble consciousness of 'the forgiveness of sins,' a lively hope of 'the resurrection of the body,' and a sweet anticipation of everlasting life. 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.'" Acts xxiv. 5—16. If his judge, already prejudiced against him, should unbecomingly join issue with his accusers, and charge him with extravagance and fanaticism, he will answer, after St. Paul, with all due respect, "I am not mad; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. And I would to God, that not only thou, but also all who hear me this day, were altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Acts xxvi. 25, 29.

After a pastor has had experience of these difficult trials, he is then in a situation to confirm younger ministers, in the manner of St. Paul: "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me: that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the gentiles might hear" the gospel: "and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever." 2 Tim. i. 12; iv. 16—18.

Behold the inconveniences and dangers to which, not only Christian pastors, but all who follow the steps of the apostle Paul, will be exposed in every place where the bigoted or

he incredulous occupy the first posts in church or state ! And, whether we are called to endure torments, or only to suffer reproach in the cause of truth, let us endeavour to support the sufferings that shall fall to our lot with that resolution and meekness of which St. Paul and his adorable Master have left us such memorable examples.

TRAIT XXXV

HIS COURAGE IN CONSOLING HIS PERSECUTED BRETHREN.

PERSUADED that "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus," and particularly his ministers, "shall suffer persecution," (2 Tim. iii. 12,) the good pastor looks for opposition from every quarter ; and whenever he suffers for the testimony he bears to the truths of the gospel, he suffers not only with resolution, but with joy.

The more the god of this degenerate world exalts himself in opposition to the truth, the more he disposes every sincere heart for the reception of it. The gospel is that everlasting rock upon which the church is founded, and against which "the gates of hell" can never prevail ; and, though this rock is assailed by innumerable hosts of visible and invisible enemies, yet their repeated assaults serve only to demonstrate with increasing certainty its unshaken firmness and absolute impenetrability. A clear sight of the sovereign good, as presented to us in the gospel, is sufficient to make it universally desirable. The veil of inattention, however, conceals, in a great measure, this sovereign good, and the mists of prejudice entirely obscure it. But by the inhuman conduct of the persecutors of Christianity, their false accusations, their secret plots, and their unexampled cruelty, these mists are frequently dissipated, and these veils rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Error is by these means unwittingly exposed to the view of the world ; while every impartial observer, attracted by the charms of persecuted truth, examines into its nature, acknowledges its excellence, and at length

triumphs in the possession of that inestimable pearl which he once despised. Thus the tears of the faithful, and the blood of confessors, have been generally found to scatter and nourish the seed of the kingdom.

Ye zealous defenders of truth, let not the severest persecutions alarm your apprehensions or weaken your confidence, since every trial of this kind must necessarily terminate in your own advantage, as well as in the establishment and glory of the Christian faith. Error, always accompanied with contradictions, and big with absurd consequences, will shortly appear to be supported by no other prop than that of prejudice, or passion, or the despotism of a usurped authority, which renders itself odious by the very means employed for its support. The more the partisans of every false doctrine sound the alarm against you, the more they resemble a violent multitude opposing the efforts of a few, who are labouring to extinguish the fire that consumes their neighbours' habitations; the different conduct of the one and the other must, sooner or later, manifest the incendiaries. Error may be compared to a vessel of clay, and truth to a vase of massy gold. In vain is calumny endeavouring to render the truth contemptible, by overheaping it with every thing that is abominable; in vain would prejudice give error an amiable appearance, by artfully concealing its defects; for whenever the hand of persecution shall furiously hurl the latter against the former, the solid gold will sustain the shock unhurt, while the varnished clay shall be dashed in pieces. The experience, however, of seventeen ages has not been sufficient to demonstrate to persecutors a truth so evident; nor are there wanting inexperienced believers in the church who are ready to call it in question, and who, "when persecution ariseth because of the word," are unhappily observed to lose their Christian resolution. But, "why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, the kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed? He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn," and make their malice serve to the accomplishment of his great designs. Psalm ii. 1—4.

Thus the Jews, in crucifying Christ, contributed to lay the grand foundation of the Christian church ; and afterwards, by persecuting the apostle Paul to death, gave him an opportunity of bearing the torch of truth to Rome, and even into the palaces of its emperors. And it was from Rome itself, as from the jaws of a devouring lion, that he comforted the faithful, who were ready to faint at his afflictions, and encouraged them to act in conformity to their glorious vocation : “ I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer, even unto bonds ; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him ; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him ; if we deny him, he also will deny us. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner ; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God ; who hath called us according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel ; whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle ; for the which cause I also suffer these things : nevertheless, I am not ashamed. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. ii. 9—12 ; i. 8—12 ; ii. 3.

Happy is the faithful minister of Christ amid all the severe afflictions to which he is sometimes exposed. Though “ troubled on every side,” yet he is “ not distressed ;” though “ perplexed,” yet “ not in despair ;” though “ persecuted,” yet “ not forsaken ;” though “ cast down,” yet “ not destroyed.” All the violent attacks of his enemies must finally contribute to the honour of his triumph, while their flagrant injustice gives double lustre to the glorious cause in which he suffers.

TRAIT XXXVI.

HIS HUMBLE CONFIDENCE IN PRODUCING THE SEALS OF
HIS MINISTRY.

A PASTOR must, sooner or later, convert sinners, if he sincerely and earnestly calls them to repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, though filled with indignation against sin, with compassion toward the impenitent, and with gratitude to Christ, he should, like St. Paul, in proportion to his strength, wrestle with God by prayer, with sinners by exhortation, and with the flesh by abstinence; yet even then, as much unequal to that apostle, as he was unequal to his Master, he may reasonably despair of frequently beholding the happy effects of his evangelical labours. But if he cannot adopt the following apostolic language, "Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place;" he will, at least, be able to say in his little sphere, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life." 2 Cor. ii. 14—16. If he has not, like St. Paul, planted new vines, he is engaged, with Apollos, in watering those which are already planted; he is rooting up some withered cumberers of the ground, he is lopping off some unfruitful branches, and propping up those tender sprigs which the tempest has beaten down.

He would be the most unhappy of all faithful ministers, had he not some in his congregation to whom he might with propriety address himself in the following terms: "Do we need epistles of commendation to you? Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." 2 Cor. iii. 1—3. "Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye

in the Lord. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the gospel." 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2; iv. 15.

When a minister of the gospel, after labouring for several years in the same place, is unacquainted with any of his flock, to whom he might modestly hold the preceding language, it is to be feared, that he has laboured too much like the generality of pastors in the present day, since "the word of God," when delivered with earnestness and without adulteration, "is" usually "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." Heb. iv. 12 "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Behold, I am against them that cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness : therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." Jer. xxiii. 28—32.

Those ministers who are anxious so to preach, and so to conduct themselves, as neither to trouble the peace of the formal, nor to alarm the fears of the impenitent, are undoubtedly the persons peculiarly alluded to in the following solemn passage of Jeremiah's prophecy :—"Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets ; all my bones shake because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness. For both prophet and priest are profane ; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. They walk in lies," either actually or doctrinally ; "they strengthen also the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness. From the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. They speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say unto them that "secretly "despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace ; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shali come upon you. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran : I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if

they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." Jer. xxiii. 9—22.

Behold the reason why nothing can so much afflict a faithful minister as not to observe from time to time unfeigned conversions effected among the people by means of his ministry. The husbandman, after having diligently prepared and plentifully sowed his fields, is sensibly afflicted when he sees the hopes of his harvest all swept away at once by a furious storm ; but he feels not so lively a sorrow as the charitable pastor who, after having liberally scattered around him the seeds of wisdom and piety, beholds his parish still overrun with the noxious weeds of vanity and vice. If Nabals are still intoxicated ; if Cains are still implacable ; if Ananias are still deceitful, and Sapphiras still prepared to favour their deceit ; if Marthas are still cumbered with earthly cares ; if Dinahs are still exposing themselves to temptation, even to the detriment of their honour, and to the loss of that little relish which they once discovered for piety ; and if the formal still continue to approach God with their lips, while their hearts are far from him ; a good pastor, at the sight of these things, is pierced through with many sorrows, and feels, in a degree, what Elijah felt when, overburdened with fatigue and chagrin, " he sat down under a juniper tree, and said, It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am not better than my fathers," 1 Kings xix. 4.

Indifference in a matter of so great importance is one of the surest marks by which an unworthy pastor may be discerned. Of what consequence is it to a worldly minister whether the flock, about which he takes so little trouble, is composed of sheep or goats ? He seeks not so much to benefit his people, as to discharge the more exterior duties of his office in such a way as may not incur the censure of his superiors in the church, who, possibly, are not a whit less lukewarm than himself. And if a tolerable party of his unclean flock do but disguise themselves three or four times in a year, for the

purpose of making their appearance at the sacramental table, he is perfectly satisfied with the good order of his parish ; especially when the most detestable vices, such as extortion, theft, adultery, or murder, are not openly practised in it. This outward kind of decency, which is so satisfactory to the worldly minister, and which is ordinarily effected by the constraining force of the civil laws, rather than by the truths of the gospel, affords the faithful pastor but little consolation. He is solicitous to see his people hungering and thirsting after righteousness, working out their salvation with fear and trembling, and engaging in all the duties of Christianity with as much eagerness as the children of the world pursue their shameful pleasures or trifling amusements ; and if he has not yet enjoyed this satisfaction, he humbles himself before God, and anxiously inquires after the reason of so great an unhappiness. He is conscious, that if his ministry is not productive of good fruit, the sterility of the word must flow from one or other of the following causes : either he publishes not the gospel in its full latitude and purity in a manner sufficiently animating, or in simplicity and faith ; perhaps he is not careful to second his zealous discourses by an exemplary conduct ; perhaps he is negligent in imploring the blessing of God upon his public and private labours ; or probably his hearers may have conceived inveterate prejudices against him, which make them inattentive to his most solemn exhortations ; so that, instead of being received among them as an ambassador of Christ, he can apply to himself the proverb formerly cited by his rejected Master : “ No prophet is accepted in his own country,” where he is accustomed to be seen without ceremony, and heard without curiosity. If the fault appears to be on his own side, he endeavours to apply the most speedy and efficacious remedies, redoubling his public labours, and renewing his secret supplications, with more than ordinary fervour of spirit. But if, after repeated trials, he is convinced that his want of success chiefly flows from the invincible hatred of his flock to the truths of the gospel, or from the sovereign contempt which his parishioners manifest both for his

person and his labours ; he is then justified in following the example of his unerring Master, who refused to exercise his ministry in those places where prejudice had locked up the hearts of the people against the reception of his evangelical precepts.

When, in such a situation, a pastor is fearful of following the example of our Lord, lest he should be left destitute of a maintenance, in how deplorable a state must he drag through the wearisome days of a useless life ! If every sincere Christian is ready to take up his cross, to quit friends and possessions, yea, to renounce life itself, on account of the gospel, can we consider that minister as a man really consecrated to the service of Christ, who has not resolution sufficient to give up a house, a garden, and a salary, when the welfare of his own soul and the interests of the church require such a sacrifice ?

When a preacher of the gospel counts less upon the promises of his Master than upon the revenues of his benefice, may we not reasonably conclude, that he is walking in the footsteps of Baalam, rather than in those of St. Paul ? And is it for such a man to declare the statutes of the Lord, or to recite the words of his covenant ? Psalm l. 16. Is he not attempting to publish, before he effectually believes, the truths of the gospel ? And has he not a front of brass when, with the dispositions of a Demas, he mounts the pulpit to celebrate the bounty of that God who supplies the little wants of sparrows, who feedeth the young ravens that call upon him, opening his hand, and filling all things living with plenteousness ? Let such a one consider, that the character of a virtuous preceptor, or an honest tradesman, is abundantly more honourable than that of a mercenary priest.

In general, it may be reasonably supposed, that if a pastor faithfully exercises his ministry in any place, to which he has been appointed by the providence of God, he will either benefit those among whom he is called to labour, or his hardened hearers will at length unite to drive him from among them, as the inhabitants of Nazareth forced Jesus away from their ungrateful city. Or, if he should not be forcibly removed from his post,

as was the case of our Lord in the country of the Gadarenes, yet, believing it incumbent upon him to retire from such a part, he will seek out some other place in his Master's vineyard, that shall better repay the pains of cultivation; whatever such a removal may cost him in the judgment of the world. And, indeed, such a mode of conduct was positively prescribed by our Lord to his first ministers in the following solemn charge:—"Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when," slighted and reproached by its unworthy inhabitants, ye are constrained to "depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet," as a testimony against those who prefer the maxims of the world before the precepts of the gospel. Matt. x. 11, 14.

If any pastor refuses to adopt this method of proceeding after patience has had its perfect work; if he still fears to give up an establishment, as the sons-in-law of Lot were afraid of forsaking their possessions in Sodom; he then acts in direct opposition to the command of Christ; he obstinately occupies the place of a minister against whom, very probably, less prejudice might be entertained, and whose ministry, of consequence, would be more likely to produce some salutary effect; he loses his time in casting pearls before swine; and, instead of converting his parishioners, he only aggravates the condemnation due to their obduracy.

The faithful pastor, however, is not soon discouraged, though he beholds no beneficial consequences of his ministry. His unbounded charity suffers, hopes, and labours long, without fainting. The more sterile the soil appears which he is called to cultivate, the more he waters it, both with his tears and with the sweat of his brow; the more he implores for it "the dew of heaven," and the influences of that divine sun which spreads light and life through every part of the church. It is not, therefore, let it be repeated, till after patience has had its perfect work, that a conscientious minister takes the final resolution of quitting his post in order to seek

out some other situation in which his labours may be attended with greater profit.

TRAIT XXXVII.

HIS READINESS TO SEAL WITH HIS BLOOD THE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL.

HE who is not yet prepared to die for his Lord hath not yet received that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear;" and it is a matter of doubt whether any preacher is worthy to appear in a pulpit, whose confidence in the truths of the gospel is not strong enough to dispose him, in certain situations, to seal those truths with his blood. If he really shrinks from the idea of dying in the cause of Christianity, is it for him to publish a Saviour who is "the resurrection and the life?" And may he not be said to play with his conscience, his auditors, and his God, if, while he is the slave of sin and fear, he presents himself as a witness of the salvation of that omnipotent Redeemer who, "through death, has destroyed him that had the power of death;" and who, by his resurrection, has "delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage?" Heb. ii. 14, 15. "Love," in the language of Solomon, "is strong as death;" but the true minister glows with that fervent love to Christ and his brethren, which is abundantly stronger than those fears of death which would prevent him, in times of persecution, from the faithful discharge of his ministerial functions. Such was the love of St. Paul, when he cried out to those who would have dissuaded him from the dangerous path of duty: "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts xxi. 13. "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions

abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." Acts xx. 22—24. "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation, that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. And if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." Phil. i. 19—21 ; ii. 17.

Thus "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep : but he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth ; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep." John x. 11, 12. Happy is that church whose pastor is prepared to tread in the steps of "the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls !" St. Paul would not have been ashamed to acknowledge such a one as his companion and fellow-labourer in the work of the Lord.

TRAIT XXXVIII.

THE SWEET SUSPENSE OF HIS CHOICE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

WHATEVER desire the faithful pastor may have to be with Christ, and to rest from his labours, yet he endures with joy his separation from the person of his Saviour, through the sacred pleasure he experiences in the service of his members. The sweet equilibrium, in which his desire was suspended between life and death, is thus expressed by the apostle Paul : "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven : knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are

absent from the Lord." 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 6. "Yet what I shall choose, I ~~avot~~ not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." Phil. i. 22—25.

It is chiefly when believers have the unconquerable love of St. Paul, "that all things work together for their good." Whether they live, or whether they die, every occurrence turns out a matter of favour. If they live, it is, that they may support their companions in tribulation, and insure to themselves a greater reward, by maintaining, for a longer season, the victorious fight of faith. If they die, it is, that they may rest from their labours, and come to a more perfect enjoyment of their Master's presence. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13. And in the mean time, blessed are the living who live in the Lord; for they are honourably engaged in those important conflicts which will daily add to their spiritual strength, and augment the brilliancy of their final triumph.

TRAIT XXXIX.

THE CONSTANCY OF HIS ZEAL AND DILIGENCE TO THE END OF HIS COURSE.

LIVING or dying, the faithful servant of Christ never acts unworthy of his character. "Blameless and harmless in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, a child of God, without rebuke, he shines," to the end of his course, "as a light in the world." Philip. ii. 15. He beholds death, whether it be natural or violent, always without fear, and generally with pleasure; regarding it as a messenger appointed for his safe conduct into that glorious state where they rejoice together who have continued faithful to the

end. He is anxious only, that his Lord may find him occupied in the grand business he was commissioned to perform ; and the nearer his hour approaches, the more earnest he is, that he may finish his ministry with joy. If he is no longer able to exhort the brethren in person, he writes to them in the manner of St. Peter : “ I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things,”—the doctrines, precepts, threatenings, and promises of the gospel,—“ though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ; knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.” 2 Pet. i. 12—14. He desires at such a season, to address the faithful, and especially young ministers, as St. Paul addressed the Corinthians and Timothy :—“ My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Cor. xv. 58. “ Thou,” Timothy, “ hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra ; what persecutions I endured : but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry ; for I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” 2 Tim. iii. 10—12 ; iv. 5, 6.

Thus triumphantly St. Paul advanced toward the end of his course. And thus the faithful minister, pouring fresh oil into his lamp as the night advances, goes forth to meet his approaching God, whom his faith already considers as a merciful Judge, and his hope as a munificent Rewarder.

TRAIT XL.

HIS TRIUMPH OVER THE EVILS OF LIFE AND THE TERRORS
OF DEATH.

THE living faith that sustains a good pastor, or a believer in Christ, amid all the difficulties and afflictions of life, causes him more especially to triumph at the approach of death even in all its most terrific appearances. Ever filled with an humble confidence in Him who is the resurrection and the life, he frequently expresses the assurance of his victorious faith, at this solemn season, in the manner of St. Paul: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." 2 Cor. ii. 14. "Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you:" therefore "we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. iv. 14—17. Thus, holding up the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, and to receive the piercing arrows of the angel of death, he expects his last hour without fear or impatience, cheerfully leaving the time, the place, the manner, and the circumstances of this concluding trial to the disposal of that God whose wisdom, goodness, and power are all combined to insure him the victory. Whether he is called by the providence of God in a chamber, or upon a scaffold, to taste the bitter cup of which his Master drank so deeply, he prepares himself to accompany a suffering Saviour, encouraged with the hope, that he shall not be tempted above his strength, and that, if he suffers and dies with the King of glory, he shall also rise and reign together with him.

At length the fatal shaft is thrown,—whether by accident, by disease, or by the hand of an executioner, is of little consequence: the true Christian, prepared for all events, sees and submits to the order of providence. He receives the mortal blow, either with humble resignation,

or with holy joy. In the first case, his soul is sweetly disengaged from its earthly tabernacle, while he breathes out the supplicatory language of happy Simeon: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." But in the second case, he leaves the world in a state of holy triumph, crying out in the fullest assurance of faith, "My persuasion takes place of sight; and without the help of vision I endure, as seeing Him that is invisible; as effectually sustained as though, contemplating, with Stephen, an open heaven, I saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God, ready to save and glorify my soul." Of these two manners of holy dying, the most enviable appears to have been the lot of St. Paul, if we may judge from the anticipated triumph which graces several of his epistles, and particularly the last he addressed to Timothy from Rome, where he received the crown of martyrdom: "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Philip. i. 23; iii. 8, 10. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; to whom be glory for ever and ever." 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 18. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or the sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 35—39. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.

Thus the great apostle went forth to meet his last trial, counting it an honour to suffer in the cause of truth, and

rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. The enemies of Christianity rendered him at last conformable to Christ in his death ; * but while they severed his head from his body, they united his happy spirit more intimately to that exalted Jesus who had once met him in the way, and who now was waiting to receive him at the end of his course. Happy are the faithful who, like this faithful apostle, live unto the Lord : yet happier they who, like him, are enabled to die unto the Lord ; “ their works do follow them,” while “ they rest from their labours,” and wait in peace the resurrection and all the sublime rewards of the righteous.

* Tradition informs us, that St. Paul, in the second journey he made to Rome, received the crown of martyrdom under the emperor Nero, about thirty-five years after the crucifixion of our blessed Lord. St. Clement, the contemporary of St. Paul, speaks of that apostle in the following terms, in his first epistle to the Corinthians : “ By means of jealousy, Paul has received the prize of perseverance. Having been seven times in bonds, having been evil-entreated and stoned, having preached in the east and in the west, he has obtained the glorious prize of his faith. After having instructed all the world in righteousness, coming into the west, he has suffered martyrdom under those who command ; and thus quitting the world, after having shown in it a great example of patience, he is gone into the holy place.”

THE
PORTRAIT
OF
LUKEWARM MINISTERS
AND
FALSE APOSTLES.

CHAPTER I.

THE PORTRAIT OF LUKEWARM MINISTERS.

THE essence of painting consists in a happy mixture of light and shade, from the contrast of which an admirable effect is produced, and the animated figure made to rise from the canvass. Upon this principle we shall oppose to the portrait of St. Paul, that of lukewarm ministers and false apostles, whose gloomy traits will form a background peculiarly adapted to set off the character of an evangelical pastor.

If the primitive church was disturbed and misled by unfaithful ministers, it may be reasonably presumed, that, in this more degenerate period of its existence, the church of God must be miserably overrun with teachers of the same character. There is, however, no small number of ministers who form a kind of medium between zealous pastors and false apostles. These irresolute evangelists are sincere to a certain point: they have some desire after the things of God, but are abundantly more solicitous for the things of the world; they form good resolutions in the cause of their acknowledged Master, but are timid and unfaithful when called upon actual service; they are sometimes actuated by a momentary zeal, but generally

influenced by servile fear ; they have no experience of that ardent affection and that invincible courage with which St. Paul was animated ; their wisdom is still carnal ; 2 Cor. i. 12 ; they still confer “ with flesh and blood.” Gal. i. 16. Such was Aaron, who yielded, through an unmanly weakness, to the impious solicitations of his people. Such was Jonah, when he refused to exercise his ministry at Nineveh. That this prophet was possessed of a confidence in God, and a desire for the salvation of his fellow-creatures, we have every reason to believe ; but we find that neither the one nor the other was sufficiently powerful to engage him in a service which appeared likely to endanger his reputation among men. Such were also the apostles before they were endued with power from on high. To every pastor of this character that expression of Christ, which was once addressed to the most courageous man among his disciples, may be considered as peculiarly applicable : “ Thou art an offence unto me ; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Matt. xvi. 23.

Lukewarmness, false prudence, and timidity, are the chief characteristics by which ministers of this class may be distinguished. Perceiving the excellence of the gospel in an obscure point of view, and having little experience of its astonishing effects, they cannot possibly discover that religious zeal which is indispensably necessary to the character they affect to sustain.

The pious bishop Massillon gives the following representation of these unqualified teachers, and the ill effects of their unfaithfulness :—“ Manners are every day becoming more corrupt among us, because the zeal of ministers is daily becoming colder, and because there are found among us few apostolical men who oppose themselves, as a brasen wall, to the torrent of vice. For the most part, we behold the wicked altogether at ease in their sins, for the want of hearing more frequently those thundering voices which, accompanied with the Spirit of God, would effectually rouse them from their awful slumber. The want of zeal, so clearly discernible among pastors, is chiefly owing to that base timidity which is not hardy enough to make a

resolute stand against common prejudice, and which regards the worthless approbation of men beyond their eternal interests. That must needs be a worldly and criminal consideration which makes us more anxious for our own glory than for the glory of God ; that must truly be fleshly wisdom which can represent religious zeal under the false ideas of excess, indiscretion, and temerity,—a pretext this which nearly extinguishes every spark of zeal in the generality of ministers. This want of courage they honour with the specious names of ‘moderation’ and ‘prudence.’ Under pretence of not carrying their zeal to an excess, they are content to be entirely destitute of it ; and while they are solicitous to shun the rocks of imprudence and precipitation, they run without fear upon the sands of indolence and cowardice. They desire to become useful to sinners, and, at the same time, to be had in estimation by them. They long to manifest such a zeal as the world is disposed to applaud. They are anxious so to oppose the passions of men, that they may yet secure their praises ; so to condemn the vices they love, that they may still be approved by those they condemn. But when we probe a wound to the bottom, we must expect to awaken a degree of peevishness in the patient, if we do not extort from him some bitter exclamation.”

“Let us not deceive ourselves,” continues the same author : “if that apostolical zeal which once converted the world is become so rare among us, it is because in the discharge of our sacred functions we seek ourselves, rather than the glory of Christ, and the salvation of souls. Glory and infamy were regarded by the apostle with equal indifference while he filled up the duties of his important office. He knew it impossible to please men, and to save them ; to be the servant of the world, and the servant of Christ. Nevertheless, there are many among us who are seeking to unite these different services which the apostle believed to be irreconcilable.”

M. Roques agrees with the pious bishop in condemning those ministers who neglect to copy the example of St. Paul. “The little piety that is to be found among ministers,” says this excellent writer, “is the most effectual

obstacle to the progress of the gospel. By 'piety' I mean, that sincere and ardent love for religion which deeply interests a man in all its concerns, as well as in every thing that respects the glory of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. If this divine love was found reigning in the hearts of those who proclaim Christ; if every preacher of the gospel was enabled to say with the sincerity of Peter, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' (John xxi. 15,) thou knowest that I have no ambition but for thy glory, and that my highest pleasure consists in beholding the increase of thy kingdom; we should then perceive the word of God in their hands like a two-edged sword, cutting asunder the very deepest roots of sin. But as the gospel is preached more through contention, through vain-glory, and through the desire of getting a livelihood by serving at the altar, than through an ardent zeal to advance the glory of God; hence it is that ministers fall into various errors, giving evident proofs of that indolence and unconcern which afford matter of scandal, rather than of edification." Evangelical Pastor.

M. Ostervald speaks the same language in his third source of the corruption which reigns among Christians. "A great part of our ecclesiastics," says this writer, "may be justly charged with the corruption of the people, since there are among them many who oppose the re-establishment of a holy discipline, while others render the exercise of it totally useless, by an ill-timed softness, and a shameful indulgence."

"I except those," continues this venerable pastor, "who ought to be excepted. But, on a general view, in what do ecclesiastics differ from other men? Do they distinguish themselves by an exemplary life? Their exterior, indeed, is somewhat different; they lead a more retired life; they, in some degree, save appearances, though all do not go thus far. But, beyond this are they not equally attached to the world, as much engaged with earthly things, as wholly taken up with secular views, as constantly actuated by interest and passion, as the generality of mankind?"

Christian prudence required that these portraits of lukewarm ministers should be exhibited, as the designs of pastors who have been eminent for their piety, their rank, and experience, and who, on that account, had a peculiar right to declare those truths which might give greater offence were they to come from less respectable persons.

CHAPTER. II.

THE PORTRAIT OF FALSE APOSTLES

BETWEEN the state of careless ministers and that of false apostles there is not, in reality, so vast a difference as many are apt to imagine. An unworthy labourer in the spiritual vineyard gives speedy proofs of a lukewarm temper in the service of his Lord; shortly after, his heart becomes entirely cold, with respect to piety; and, what is still more lamentable, he frequently manifests as warm a zeal for error and vice, as the true minister can possibly discover in the cause of truth and virtue. Such is the state of those who may properly be termed preachers of the third class, and who are spoken of by St. Paul under the title of "false apostles." 2 Cor. xi. 13.

These unworthy ministers are known by their works. Like many of St. Paul's unfaithful fellow-labourers, (2 Tim. i. 15.) they prefer the repose and pleasure of the world before the service and reproach of Christ. Like Judas and Simon the sorcerer, they love the honours and revenues of ministers, while they abhor the crosses and labours of the ministry. Like Hophni and Phinehas, they are "sons of Belial, and know not the Lord. Their sin is very great before the Lord;" for on their account many "abhor the offering of the Lord." 1 Sam. ii. 12, 17. Like the wicked servant described by their reputed Master, instead of providing "meat for his household in due season," they "begin to smite" or to persecute those of their "fellow-servants" who are intent upon discharging their several duties, while they pass away their time in mirth and fes-

tivity with the riotous and the drunken. Matt. xxiv. 48, 49. They may justly be compared to lamps extinguished in the temple of God: "Instead of shining there to his praise," says bishop Massillon, "they emit black clouds of smoke, which obscure every object about them, and become a savour of death to those who perish. They are pillars of the sanctuary which, being overthrown and scattered in public places, become stones of stumbling to every heedless passenger. They are the salt of the earth, and were appointed to preserve souls from corruption; but, having lost all their savour, they begin to corrupt what they were intended to preserve." They are physicians who carry to their patients infection instead of health: from the spiritually diseased they withhold the healing word of God, (Psalm cvii. 20,) while they distribute among them the dangerous poison of a lax morality, setting before them an example of bitter zeal against the truth, puffing them up with that wisdom which is earthly, sensual, and devilish. James iii. 14, 15.

"A false pastor," says M. Roques, or a false apostle, "is a minister whose heart is not right before God, and who lives not in such a manner as to edify his flock. He knows the holy course of life to which Christians in general and ministers in particular are called; but in spite of all his knowledge and his apparent zeal, he fears not to trample under foot those very maxims of the gospel which he has publicly established and preached with the utmost energy. Every day he performs acts of the most detestable hypocrisy. Every time he preaches and censures, he bears open testimony against his own conduct; but he publicly accuses, without ever intending to correct, himself. He is a constant declaimer against vice in the pulpit, but a peculiar protector of it while he is engaged in the common concerns of life. While he exhorts his hearers to repentance, he either imagines himself above those laws which he proposes to others on the part of God; or he believes himself under no other necessity of holding them forth, than his known engagement to such a work, and the salary he receives for the performance of it."

M. Ostervald, in a work already referred to, makes mention of these pastors in the following terms :—"How many do we see who regard their holy vocation in no other light than the means of procuring for themselves a comfortable maintenance! Are there not many who bring a scandal upon their profession by the licentiousness of their manners? Do we not see them hasty and outrageous? Do we not observe in them an extreme attachment to their own interests? Are they careful to rule their families well? Has it not been a subject of complaint, that they are puffed up with pride, and are implacable in their hatred? I say nothing of many other vices and defects which are equally scandalous in the clergy; such as vain and loose conversation, an attachment to diversion and pleasure, a worldly disposition, slothfulness, craft, injustice, and slander."

"It is impossible to find a person," adds M. Ostervald, "surrounded with more powerful motives to piety, than a man whose ordinary occupation is to meditate upon religious things, to discourse of them among others, to reprove vice and hypocrisy, to perform divine service, to administer the holy sacraments, to visit the afflicted and the dying, and who must one day render to God an account of the souls committed to his charge. I know not whether it be possible to find any stronger marks of impiety and hypocrisy than those which may be discovered in the character of a person who, in the midst of all these favourable circumstances, is, nevertheless, an unrighteous man. Such a one may be said to divert himself with the most sacred things of religion, and to spend the whole of his life in performing the part of an impostor. And this he does to his cost, since there is no profession in the world that will more effectually secure a sentence of condemnation, than that of the priesthood when exercised in so unfaithful a manner."

But it is chiefly in the holy scriptures where these unworthy pastors are portrayed in so strong a point of view, that every attentive observer may readily discern their distinguishing features. "Son of man," saith the Lord, "prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, and say unto

them, Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed : but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost ; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. Therefore thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand." Ezek. xxxiv. 2—10. "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." 2 Tim. iii. 8. "Woe unto them ! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds ; trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots ; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame ; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Jude 11—13.

St. John has not only drawn the character, but has likewise given us the name, of a certain tyrannical teacher who began to disturb the peace of the primitive church. "I wrote unto the church," saith he to Gaius, concerning the reception of stranger evangelists : "but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. If I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words : and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." 3 John 9, 10. Behold a striking description of proud and persecuting ecclesiastics.

But, perhaps, the most complete description of these persons is given by our Lord himself, where he treats of worthless pastors in general, under the particular names of "scribes" and "pharisees." Here a divine and impartial hand delineates the jealousy, the pride, the feigned morality, the malice, and the persecuting spirit, which characterise this class of men in every age of the world. "Do not ye," saith Christ, "after their works ; for they

say, and do not. All their works they do to be seen of men. They love the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Ye neglect judgment, mercy, and faith. Ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Because ye garnish the sepulchres of the righteous," ye vainly imagine yourselves free from a persecuting spirit, while, in other matters, as "the children of them which killed the prophets," ye are labouring to "fill up the measure of your fathers." "Behold, I send unto you prophets" and zealous preachers of the word; "and some of them ye shall kill, and some of them ye shall persecute from city to city." Matt. xxiii. 3—34.

We need take but a cursory view of the new testament for sufficient proof that these worldly-minded scribes and these furious bigots above-represented, were the very persons who pursued the first evangelists with such deadly rancour. Had it not been for Annas and Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate would silently have permitted the preaching of Jesus himself. These, who were the chief men in the state, after refusing to embrace the word of God, on their own part, would most probably have contented themselves with denying its truths and ridiculing its followers; but they would never have passed a sentence of death upon so eminently holy a person as the blessed Jesus.

The peculiar opposers of Jesus and his disciples were powerfully influenced by jealous pride; and with the same malignant disposition every false apostle in the Christian church is deeply infected. The prelate, whose pen we have already borrowed, gives the following lively description of this unhappy temper:—"This despicable jealousy not only dishonours zeal, but supposes it extinguished in the heart. It is an infamous disposition which afflicts itself even for the conversion of sinners, and for the progress of the gospel, when it is through the ministry of others that God is pleased to work these miracles.

The glory of God seldom interests us so much as when our own glory appears to be mingled with his. We endure, with some kind of regret, that God should be glorified; and I will dare to add, that some of us could behold our brethren perishing with pleasure, rather than see them rescued from death by other labours and other talents than our own. St. Paul rejoiced to see the gospel spread abroad, though it were by the ministry of those who sought to disgrace him among the faithful; and Moses desired that all his brethren might receive the gift of prophecy; but we are anxious to stand alone, and to share with no person the glory and success of the holy ministry. Every thing that eclipses our own brightness or shines too near us, becomes insupportable, and we appear to regard the gifts of God in others, merely as a shame and reproach to ourselves." Observe here the true source of those specious pretexts which are professedly drawn from the order, the customs, and even from the prejudices of the world; pretexts under which we dare to oppose the zeal of our brethren, to withstand the word of God in its course, and to render the cross of the ministry more burdensome to those who carry it further than we are disposed to do. One distinguishing mark of these turbulent evangelists is that of being thorns in the sides of true ministers, whom they never fail to represent as deceivers or novices, causing the truest piety to wear the semblance of enthusiasm and folly. "They speak evil of the things they understand not;" 2 Peter ii. 12; and by the most malicious discourses, which have always an appearance of zeal for religion and order, they are gradually rousing anew that spirit of persecution by which the name of Christ has been so universally disgraced in the world.

In the earliest age of the Christian church, these false apostles, swelling with envy at the success of more faithful ministers, made use of every effort to render them contemptible, by giving false representations of their holy zeal and their exemplary actions. Thus they accused St. Paul of walking "according to the flesh;" and asserted, that though "his letters were weighty and powerful," yet

"his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible." 2 Cor. x. 2, 10. Nay, so anxious were they in seeking occasions for offence in the conduct of this apostle, that he believed himself obliged, in the end, publicly to expose them. "These are false apostles," says he, "deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing, if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 2 Cor. xi. 13—15. As our Lord foresaw that these strenuous opposers of real religion would bring his church to the very brink of ruin, he exhorted his disciples continually to stand upon their guard against them. Matt. vii. 15. And the apostles, after steadily following their Master's important advice, were diligent in transmitting it to the latest of their followers. Acts xx. 28—30.

One necessary remark shall conclude this chapter. In the portrait of St. Paul, we have seen that of an evangelical pastor; in the preceding chapter we have marked the character of a careless minister; and in this we behold the faithful representation of a false apostle. Let us remember, that one of these three portraits must agree, more or less, with every preacher of the gospel. I say "more or less," because the various traits here marked out may be varied to an almost inconceivable degree. Moreover, so inconstant is man, that a minister, who to-day is possessed of zeal sufficient to rank him with preachers of the first class, may to-morrow, by an unhappy remissness, sink in the second, as once did John whose surname was Mark; or even into the third, as Hymeneus and Philetus, Diotrophes and Demas. On the contrary, a man who now discovers many of those characteristic traits by which Saul the pharisee was once distinguished, may, ere long, become an humble imitator of the zeal and charity of Paul the apostle.

CHAPTER III.

AN ANSWER TO THE FIRST OBJECTION WHICH MAY BE
MADE AGAINST THE PORTRAIT OF ST. PAUL.

OBJECTIONS are the ordinary weapons with which error makes war upon truth, and these are sometimes so powerful, that till they are effectually repelled, we see truth deprived of its rights. The first that will probably be advanced against the portrait of St. Paul is this: "The model placed before us is too exalted for those who are not endued with the miraculous gifts of St. Paul."

To this and every other objection we shall offer a variety of replies in as concise a manner as possible. To the present objection a sufficient answer has been already returned by a truly respectable author. "This excuse," says Monsieur Roques, "might have some weight, if, in proposing the example of Christ to persons who are honoured with the holy ministry, we insisted upon their keeping pace with the Saviour of mankind. But this excuse is altogether frivolous, when nothing more is required of ministers, than continually to place Christ as a model before their eyes, and to imitate him with all the exactness of which they are capable." "This excuse," continues he, "is still more unreasonable when applied to prophets and apostles, who were men of like passions with ourselves; and who, of consequence, may be placed before us as models, whose perfections are attainable by means of the very same succours which supported them, and which are never refused to those who have sincere and apostolical intentions." Evangelical Pastor.

To the answer of this pious divine, we shall subjoin a few observations:—

1. In the portrait of St. Paul there is found no large description of miraculous gifts, but a faithful representation of those Christian virtues which are found in every believer, according to his vocation, and without which, it is impossible for us to fill up our several duties, such as humility, faith, charity, zeal, and assiduity.

2. The morality which was practised by St. Paul was no other than the morality of the gospel, which is the same in every age, and for every condition ; whence it follows, that the moral character of this apostle belongs not only to all true pastors, but even to every sincere believer. If St. Paul was truly humble, charitable, and pious, his humility, his charity, and his piety are as essential to the religion of every Christian, as three angles are essential to the nature of every triangle. It is granted, that the piety of this apostle was greater than that of a thousand other ministers, just as one triangle may be greater than that of a thousand others. But as the angles of the most diminutive triangle are of the same quality with those which compose a triangle of uncommon magnitude, so the moral character of St. Paul is, with regard to essentials, the moral character of every true Christian.

3. This apostle informs us, that he was obliged to keep his "body in subjection, lest" after having "preached to others," he himself "should be a castaway." 1 Cor. ix.27. This single acknowledgment sufficiently proves, that he was exposed to all those dangers with which Christians are generally beset ; and that he saw no way of escaping them, but by the use of those very precautions which the weakest believer is instructed to take. Now, if St. Paul was so fearful of falling away ; if St. Peter was really seen to stumble and fall ; and if Judas, an elected apostle, irremediably plunged himself into the depths of perdition ; it is but reasonable to suppose, that, by a faithful improvement of our privileges, we may attain to a good degree of that exalted piety from which one apostle fell for a season, and another for ever.

4. In the whole portrait of St. Paul, there is not a stronger trait than the eighteenth, which describes the ardour of his love for the Jews, who pursued him even to death ; a love, that made him willing to be accursed in dying for them, as his gracious Master had been in dying for the world. Now this charity is so far from being an attainment too exalted for true ministers, that it is indiscriminately required of every professing Christian.

"Hereby," saith St. John, "perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us ; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John iii. 16. And our Lord himself hath said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 35. It is by a new commandment to this effect, that the morality of the gospel is peculiarly distinguished from that of the law. And shall we impiously attempt to enervate evangelical morality? Let us rather declare, upon all occasions, that "he who loveth not, knoweth not God." 1 John iv. 8. Let us cry out with the apostle, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha:" and if a man love not his brethren, he loves not the Lord Jesus ; "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 Cor. xvi. 22 ; 1 John iv. 20.

On the other hand, when we love our brethren "with a pure heart fervently," 1 Peter i. 22 ; when, disposed to universal benevolence, we can look upon our very enemies with sentiments of pity and affection ; we are then assuredly possessed of that Christian charity which forms the most brilliant trait in the moral character of St. Paul.

5. St. Paul was for three years the resident pastor of a single church. The city of Ephesus was his parish ; and while he resided there, he gave an example, which every minister, by the most solemn engagements, is bound to follow, whether he be commissioned to labour in a city or a village. During two other years of his life, this apostle was confined within narrower limits than any pastor of a parish. Shut up at Rome in a house that served him for a prison, and constantly guarded by a soldier, he was unable to extend the sphere of his labours. Yet, even in these circumstances, he continued in the diligent exercise of the holy ministry, "preaching the kingdom of God to all them that came in unto him, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

Surely nothing can appear more perfectly reasonable, than that every pastor should discover as much zeal in his particular parish as St. Paul was accustomed to manifest

in the Roman empire when he was at liberty, and in his own apartment when loaded with chains.

6. If the ardent charity and the incessant labours of St. Paul were happily imitated by Timothy, why may they not be copied by every pastor in the present day? That youthful minister was anxious to tread in the steps of this apostle; and they who are otherwise minded assuredly fall under those apostolical censures, which are thus indirectly expressed in his epistle to the Philippians:—"I trust to send Timotheus shortly unto you; for I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." Philip. ii. 19—22.

7. The destruction of the eastern churches commenced in the falling away of their pastors, who gradually abated in the fervours of that holy zeal with which they had begun to labour in the vineyard of their Lord. Of such unfaithful teachers, Christ affectingly complained in the earliest period of his church, and accompanied his complaints with the most terrible menaces. "Write unto the angel of the church of Ephesus," said he to St. John; "I know thy" former "works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars," &c. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Rev. ii. 1—5.

The warning was unattended to, and, at length, the threatened blow was struck. Thus fell the church of Ephesus, and thus every church upon earth is fallen, making way for that mystery of iniquity, and that general apostasy, which have been so long foretold. So true is it, that apostolical charity, that charity which was first lighted up on the day of pentecost, is still absolutely necessary to

every pastor, to every church, and, of consequence, to every believer.

From the combined force of these seven argumentative observations, we have a right to conclude, that the virtues of St. Paul are far from being inimitable, and that the first objection against his portrait is void of solidity.

CHAPTER IV

A SECOND OBJECTION ARGUED AGAINST.

THEY who follow the example of Diotrefes rather than that of St. Paul add to the preceding another objection, to discredit, if possible, the imitators of this great apostle. "Do you pretend," say they, "to be the successors of St. Paul and the other apostles, whom you presumptuously cite as your models?"

To such objectors the following reflections may serve as a sufficient reply:—

1. We have heard St. Paul, in the character of a believer, proposing himself as an example to all believers, and, as a minister of the gospel, exhorting every pastor to tread in his steps. 1 Cor. xi. 1; Philip. iii. 17.

2. John the baptist preached repentance; the apostles proclaimed remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;" Rom. iv. 25; and every true minister still continues to insist upon these important doctrines. Now, as he who takes the place of a person deceased is accounted the successor of such person, so these faithful pastors should be regarded as teachers appointed to succeed both the forerunner and the apostles of Christ. It must be allowed, that the apostles, as elders in the family of our Lord, were in possession of privileges which we are not permitted to enjoy. But if the gospel is unchangeable, and if the kingdom of God still remains under its ancient form of government, the priesthood must, for the most part, of necessity continue the same.

3. There was a time in which the Jewish priests had lost the Urim and Thummim, with which Aaron and his sons are at first invested. There was a time in which God no longer manifested himself to his own appointed priests, as he had been accustomed to do. But as, notwithstanding the loss of that glory which formerly rested upon the Jewish church, every pious priest, such as Zacharias, was a true successor of Aaron; so, during the eclipse of that glory which once illuminated the Christian church, every pious minister may justly be accounted a true successor of St. Paul.

4. The word "apostle" signifies "one who is sent," and answers to the term "angel," or "messenger." "Our brethren," says St. Paul, who accompany Titus, "are the messengers," or apostles, "of the churches." 2 Cor. viii. 23. Every minister, therefore, who carries with sincerity the messages of his Lord, may, with propriety, be ranked among his angels, or messengers. Nor do such immediately lose their title when they neglect to perform the duties of their office. They may, like Judas, go under the name of apostles even to their death, though utterly unworthy of such an honourable appellation. Thus, after the pastors of Ephesus and Laodicea had outlived the transient fervours of their charity and zeal, they were still addressed as the angels of their several churches. And thus St. Paul gave the title of "apostle" to the worldly ministers of his time: in quality of ministers, they were apostles; but in quality of worldly ministers, they were false apostles.

5. As the name of "Cæsar" is ordinarily applied to the twelve first Roman emperors, so the name of "apostle" is ordinarily applied to the twelve first ministers of the gospel, who had been permitted to converse with their Lord, even after his resurrection; and to St. Paul, who was favoured with a glorious manifestation of his exalted Saviour. In this confined sense it is acknowledged, that the name of "apostle" belongs, in an especial manner, to those who were sent forth by Christ, after having received their consecration and commission immediately from himself; but as the name of "Cæsar," in a more general sense, may be

given to all the emperors of Rome, so the name of "apostle" may be applied to every minister of the everlasting gospel. Thus Barnabas, Andronicus, and Junia, who were neither of the number of the twelve, nor yet of the seventy were denominated "apostles," as well as St. Paul. Acts xiv. 14; Rom. xvi. 7.

6. It is the invariable opinion of slothful Christians, that the zeal of ministers, and the piety of believers, in the present day, must necessarily fall far below what they were in the apostles' time, as though the promises of Christ were unhappily limited to the primitive church. This error has been frequently refuted in vain by a variety of Christian writers, since nothing can be more conformable to that spirit of incredulity which reigns among us, than to renounce at once the most important promises of the new testament. Had the same promises been made respecting temporal honours and profits, we should see a different mode of conduct adopted; "for the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." Luke xvi. 8.

M. Roques bears the following testimony to the truth contended for in this place: "The ministers of the gospel esteem themselves, and with reason, the successors of the apostles: their employment is essentially the same, though the apostles were honoured with many glorious prerogatives, as being the first to lay the foundation of the church."

"The minister of Christ," says the same writer, "cannot be said vainly to flatter himself, when he counts upon the gracious assistance of his Master. He takes the promise of that Master for the solid foundation of his hope. 'I am with you alway,' said Christ to his apostles, and, in their persons to all those who should succeed them in the ministry, 'even unto the end of the world.' Matt. xxviii. 20."

"It was this divine promise," continues he, "a promise more steadfast than earth or heaven, that filled the apostles with such an ardent zeal, as enabled them to 'rejoice evermore,' placing them above the fury of tyrants, and beyond the reach of fear; assisting them to endure excess-

ive fatigue, and toilsome journeys, the inclemency of the seasons, and the resistance of obdurate hearts." Impressed with a just sense of this important promise, the venerable writer concludes with this fervent prayer: "Holy Jesus, who hast promised to continue for ever with thine apostles, and to give them that wisdom which no man shall ever be able to resist, give me to experience a participation of these signal favours, that, animated by the same Spirit with which thy first disciples were inspired, I may lead some soul a happy captive to the obedience of thy word!" These beautiful quotations will make their own apology for appearing in this place.

7. If any are disposed to condemn M. Roques as an enthusiast in this point, they consider not how many great and honourable names they disgrace by such a precipitate judgment, since all those pious fathers who are looked upon as the reformers of corrupted doctrines and degenerate manners were unanimously of the same opinion.

From the preceding reflections, it seems but reasonable to conclude, that all the faithful ministers of Christ in every nation are to be considered as the true successors of the apostles, and particularly of St. Paul, who, by way of eminence, is entitled "the apostle of the gentiles," and who, on that account, may, with the greater propriety, be proposed to them as a model.

CHAPTER V

A THIRD OBJECTION REPLIED TO.

THEY who will allow neither believers nor pastors to become imitators of St. Paul very rarely forget to propose a third objection against such imitation: "If you pretend," say they, "to be the apostles' successors, then prove your mission by the performance of miracles equal to theirs."

To this objection we reply :—

1. That no mention is made of the miracles of Andronicus, Junia, and Barnabas, who were real apostles ; nor are any miracles attributed to Titus or Timothy, though they were the undoubted successors of the apostles. Further : it is expressly said, that “ John the baptist,” though he was greater than the prophets, “ did no miracle.” John x. 41. On the other hand, some miraculous gifts were common in the church of Corinth, even among those who were neither apostles nor evangelists ; and these gifts were so far from being essential to apostolic zeal, that many unworthy brethren, and many false apostles, as well as the traitor Judas, were endued with them. This we are taught, in the most express terms, by our Lord himself. Matt. vii. 22.

2. If any of those pastors who make a profession of following St. Paul are observed to publish another gospel, or to depart from the order established by the apostles, the world has then reason to require miracles at their hand, as a demonstration that their doctrines are divine, and that their recent customs are preferable to those which were formerly adopted in the church of Christ. But if they simply proclaim that glorious gospel which has been already confirmed by a thousand miracles, and are observed to adopt no other method than that of the apostles, it is absurd in the highest degree to insist upon miracles as the only sufficient evidences of their mission. From worldly pastors, such attestations of their sacred commission might with propriety be required. These are the persons who turn aside from the beaten track of Christ and his disciples, both with respect to doctrine and discipline ; and these should be required by the church to give incontestable proofs that their novel customs are better than those of St. Paul and the ancient evangelists.

3. No sufficient reason can be given why the humble imitators of St. Paul should be required to evidence their spiritual mission by extraordinary actions. On the one hand, they do but simply declare those religious truths of which they have had the most convincing experience ; and on the other, they earnestly solicit the wicked to become

partakers of the same invaluable blessings with themselves. Now, the certainty of such declaration, and the sincerity of such invitation, may be solidly established upon two kinds of proof: the first, upon those proofs which support the gospel in general; and the second, upon the holy conduct of those who bear this testimony and repeat these invitations, by which they demonstrate the efficacy of their doctrine, and indisputably prove, that true Christians are “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.” Rom. vi. 11. That pastor who is unable to produce the former proofs cannot possibly be regarded as a true successor of the great apostle; and he whose uniform conduct is insufficient to supply the latter is no other than a false apostle.

4. External miracles, which effect no change in the heart, nor rescue the soul from a state of spiritual blindness and death,—miracles which serve only to repair the organs of a body that must shortly be consigned to the grave,—miracles which tend merely to modify matter, such as causing green trees to wither, withered trees to spring, and water to gush out of the flinty rock: miracles of this nature are far less important than those which cause the thorns of vice to wither, the seeds of grace to spring, and streams of sacred consolation to flow through those very hearts which were formerly barren as a desert, and hard as the rock that Moses smote.

5. “If you wish for miracles,” says a Christian writer, “if you are anxious to experience them in yourselves; if, in the secret of your heart, you would become witnesses of his almighty power, by whom that heart was formed; then ask of him that sublime virtue, that charity, from which all your inclinations and habits detain you at so vast a distance, that you are in no situation to form any just idea of it, nor even to conceive the possibility of its existence.” Professor Crousaz’s Sermon upon 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

6. That divine charity, and those sacred consolations, which were as a “well of water springing up into everlasting life” in the hearts of Christ’s first disciples, may be made to abound even in ours. Since the source of these inestimable blessings can never be

exhausted; Heb. xiii. 8; and the faithful, who experience in themselves this gracious miracle, stand in need of no other prodigy to establish them in the faith of the gospel.

7. The most important miracles were those which were wrought by the apostles when, as fellow-workers together with God, they opened the eyes of sinners, turning them "from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God:" Acts xxvi. 18: true miracles of mercy these, and memorable conversions, which the word of God, in the mouths of his ministers, is continually operating in every age.

8. The charity which is discovered by a faithful pastor, who humbly co-operates with God in the conversion of his inveterate enemies, should be regarded by the world as the truest test of his apostleship. "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; but charity never faileth. And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains," and perform the most unheard of prodigies, "if I have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii.

The preceding replies are abundantly sufficient to demonstrate the weakness of their third objection, who are the professed enemies of the apostolic zeal.

CHAPTER VI.

A FOURTH OBJECTION REFUTED.

THE objection here proposed has been abundantly more prejudicial to the cause of piety, than any of the preceding: "You suppose," say formal professors, "that every pastor is called to labour for the salvation of souls in the present day with all that zeal which animated St. Paul in primitive times. But their circumstances differ in a very material way. The apostles were commissioned to preach the gospel, either to obstinate Jews or idolatrous heathens; whereas our pastors are called to exercise their

ministry among such as have received the truth from their earliest infancy. Is it not, then, contrary to common sense, that the same laborious efforts should be thought necessary for the instruction of Christians which St. Paul was formerly constrained to make use of for the conversion of idolaters?"

As this specious objection has been more frequently repeated than properly refuted, it becomes necessary, in this place, to expose all its weakness, and to demonstrate, that the difference between sinners who are baptized, and those with whom St. Paul had to do, is by no means in favour of indolent pastors.

1. There are found swarms of infidels and idolaters in every Christian country upon earth. We need not look beyond protestant churches to discover multitudes of impious Christians who not only despise the gospel in secret, but who even dare to make it the subject of public ridicule;—men who "have set up their idols in their hearts;" Ezekiel xiv. 3; and who perfectly answer to the apostle's description of degenerate professors." 2 Timothy iii. 2—5.

2. St. Paul himself sufficiently answers this very objection, as follows: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them." Gal. vi. 15, 16. If there are any who make a profession of receiving the Christian faith, and who follow not this evangelical rule, the apostle thus addresses them with an holy warmth: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Be not deceived; neither covetous persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

3. Observe how the same objection is combated again in another of St. Paul's epistles: Behold, thou art called a Christian, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, being instructed out of the twofold law of Moses and of Christ. Thou, that makest thy boast of this law;

if thou, through breaking the law, dishonourest God, the name of God is then blasphemed among the gentiles through you. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest" the heathen as sinners more hopeless than thyself: "for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. And thinkest thou, O man," that thy privileges unimproved will assist thee "to escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Beware lest, "after the hardness of thine impenitent heart, thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath." Rom. ii. 1—24.

4. If every scriptural threatening is denounced against those who are without that holiness which the gospel requires, it would ill become us to flatter either ourselves or others with being the true followers of Christ, merely on account of that external profession of Christianity which is generally apparent among us. Is it not undeniably evident, that such a profession, unless it be accompanied with strict holiness, will subject us to more and heavier stripes than if we had never known the will of our heavenly Father, nor ever acknowledged Christ as our rightful Lord? Luke xii. 47, 48. Did not our gracious Master himself once openly manifest a greater degree of abhorrence toward the lukewarm Christian, than toward the notorious sinner? Rev. iii. 16. And has he not plainly declared, that myriads of righteous heathens shall be permitted to sit down in the kingdom of God, while multitudes of his professing people shall be cast into outer darkness? Luke xiii. 28, 29.

5. After infants have been baptized, and after young persons have been admitted to the holy communion, the true pastor, instead of taking it for granted that they are become unfeigned Christians by partaking of these ordinances, examines them with diligence from time to time; and, from an attentive observation of their conduct, forms a judgment of their faith. If, after the strictest scrutiny, he discovers some among them who hold the form without experiencing the power of godliness, he renews his

work with increasing ardour. The most painful part of his duty is still before him, when he attempts to convert those sinners who are baptized, and those infidels who are communicants; since, before he can lead them to that "faith which worketh by love," as St. Paul was accustomed to lead unprejudiced heathens, he must first unmask them with a holy severity, as the blessed Jesus was accustomed to unmask the pharisees of his day.

6. If unregenerate Christians are heathens by their worldly disposition; if they are pharisees by their presumption, and confirmed in their pharisaism by the fallacious opinions they indulge of their prerogatives under the gospel; it follows, that every modern pastor is called to a performance of the twofold duty above described. And if this be the case, how unreasonable is it to imagine, that the ministers of our own time have a much less difficult task before them than those who were formerly commissioned to publish the gospel!

7. All pastors have an important task assigned them; and, till this is performed, they are required to labour without fainting. Observe in what this task consists: "He that descended from heaven," saith St. Paul, "gave some, apostles; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come," both pastors and flocks, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephes. iv. 10—13. When every Christian has attained to this exalted state, the ministers of the gospel may then assert their work to be complete, and need imitate no longer the diligence of St. Paul. But while we are surrounded with baptized swearers, sabbath-breakers, slanderers, gamesters, drunkards, gluttons, debauchees, blasphemers, and hypocrites, who are using every effort to render Christianity despicable before infidels, and execrable in the eyes of philosophers, at such a time it cannot be reasonably imagined that any individual labourer is permitted to stand idle in the spiritual vineyard. And yet, in this very time of universal degeneracy, there are not wanting many among us, who inconsiderately cry out, "St. Paul, without doubt, had reason to labour

with unremitting assiduity for the conversion of idolatrous heathens; but we are converted already, and see no necessity for that burning zeal, and those strenuous efforts, among our modern teachers, which were formerly commendable in that apostle."

8. If it be objected, that Christians are here represented in a more deplorable point of view than candour or observation can warrant, we make our appeal to those proclamations which have been made with a view to repress the single sin of profaning the name of God by impious oaths and horrible imprecations. These must undoubtedly be considered as public testimonies of public guilt. In such proclamations every Christian government, whether catholic or protestant, equally complain, that all the civil laws, by which they have endeavoured to enforce the law of God, have proved insufficient to prevent the overflowings of a crime, as insipid as it is disgraceful. In vain have new penalties and punishments been decreed; in vain are they constantly held forth from the pulpits of preachers and the thrones of kings: this despicable vice still reigns undisturbed among us, insulting over the broken laws of earth and heaven. Now, if it has hitherto been found impossible to prevent the commission of a sin which has neither pleasure nor profit to plead in its favour, what can we expect of all those thousand vices which allure with promises of both? Are not dissimulation and perjury, injustice and covetousness, lasciviousness and luxury apparent among the members of every church? Do not rapine, revenge, and murder defile every part of Christendom, in spite of prisons, banishment, and death? It is a truth too notorious to be controverted, that every crime with which human nature has ever been polluted is still continually practised in the most enlightened parts of the world.

We might here mention, if it were necessary, the contempt in which marriage is held, the instability of that holy estate, and the facility with which so sacred a bond is broken. We might go on to bewail the frequent commission of suicide in Christian communities. But to speak of these with many other sins, which are increasing around us to an alarming degree, would be only to echo back

those sad complaints which are every day breathed from the lips of the righteous. The above remarks may possibly appear uncharitable to some ; but, if they are without foundation, how many unmeaning expressions do we find in our liturgy ! what hypocrisy in our public confessions ! what false humility in our prayers !

From all these observations, it is evident, that the most heathenish manners are common among Christians, so called ; and that the first scandalous vices are prevalent, even in those countries where reformed Christianity has erected its standard. Let the impartial inquirer then declare, whether it be not peculiarly necessary to preach repentance among those whose rebellion against God is accompanied with perfidiousness and hypocrisy ?

CHAPTER VII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

1. WERE it even certain, that professing Christians in general walk according to their holy vocation, would it be commendable in pastors to show less concern for the salvation of Christ's apparent disciples, than was anciently discovered by St. Paul for the conversion of persecuting heathens ? Christians are our brethren. The church, our common mother, has nourished us with the same spiritual milk, and calls us to a participation of the same heavenly inheritance. Christians are no more strangers ; and even those who are bad citizens, and unfaithful domestics, are nevertheless in some sense citizens of the same city with ourselves, and "of the household of God." Eph. ii. 19. Hence, as we compose but one household, so whenever we are disposed to neglect any part of this family, we may apply to ourselves the following words of the apostle : "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." 1 Tim. v. 8. Let ministers, then, be placed in the happiest imaginable circumstances, and it will still

become them to cry out, with the pious benevolence of St. Paul,* "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. vi. 10.

2. We may here pursue the idea which Christ himself has given us, by comparing his church to a vineyard. If it be necessary to graft those stocks which are naturally wild; is it less necessary to cultivate those which have been already grafted? We see the husbandman bestowing most culture upon those vines which produce the most excellent fruit. Let ministers attend to this general rule; and since they only can be fruitful in the sacred vineyard who receive the word of God in faith, let them study to train up believers to the highest state of maturity. Thus the heavenly husbandman is represented as purging every fruitful branch, "that it may bring forth more fruit." John xv. 2.

3. The word of God must be offered to sinners as a remedy suited to the disease of their souls: but to the faithful it must be administered as nourishing food. Hence, as the order of grace resembles that of nature, it is necessary, in a spiritual sense, to minister nutriment to the healthy in much greater quantities, than medicine to those who are diseased. Thus believers, who constantly hunger and thirst after greater degrees of grace, should more frequently receive the "living word," that they "may abound yet more and more in knowledge," till they are "filled with the fruits of righteousness." Philip. i. 9, 11.

4. We find the following expressions in the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans: "I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another. Nevertheless I have written the more boldly unto you, as putting you in mind." And "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." Rom. xv. 14, 15; i. 11. Now, if St. Paul could express so earnest a desire to instruct those Christians who were perfect strangers to him, and who were already so divinely enlightened; far from being imitators of this great apostle, do we not forfeit all pretensions to charity, while we suffer those

ignorant Christians to perish "for lack of knowledge," (Hosea iv. 6.) who are not only of our neighbourhood, but probably of our very parish?

5. Though St. Paul was assisted with miraculous endowments, yet how anxiously did he endeavour to fill up the twofold duties of a believer in Christ, and a minister of his gospel! And shall we refuse to labour with equal earnestness whose gifts are so mean, and whose graces are so inconsiderable? Appointed, like the primitive preachers of Christianity, to be fishers of men, is it not perfectly reasonable, that we should manifest as great activity with our feeble lines, as St. Paul was accustomed to discover in the use of his capacious net? If that apostle, filled with holy zeal, was enabled to convert more sinners by a single discourse, than many pastors are known to convert in a thousand sermons, should we not, by our uncommon assiduity, supply, as much as possible, the want of that incomprehensible energy which accompanied his ministerial labours?

6. Ministers are compared to labourers, who go forth to cultivate the lands of their master. Now St. Paul, as the foremost of these labourers, wrought night and day with an extraordinary instrument, which marked out furrows of an uncommon depth, and ploughed up entire provinces on a sudden. He made the fullest proof of his ministry, and, by the most astonishing efforts, spread the seed of the gospel "from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum." Rom. xv. 19. How vast a difference between the former and latter pastors of the Christian church! Many of us are content to stand altogether idle, till "the night cometh, in which no man can work;" John ix. 4; while others, who are disposed to some little occupation, employ themselves as workmen who have need to be utterly ashamed of their insignificant labours. 2 Tim. ii. 15. At best we hold but a tardy instrument; an instrument which with immense toil will but barely graze the earth we are called to cultivate. And shall we, thus unhappily circumstanced, permit our ploughshares to gather rust during six successive days, and then leisurely employ them but for an hour upon the seventh? Surely such a mode of conduct is as

contrary to common sense as to the example St. Paul has left us.

7. So astonishing is the inconstancy, the weakness, and the depravity of the human heart, that in spite of all the persevering industry of this apostle in the vineyard of his Lord, it still brought forth briers and thorns, to the anguish of his soul. "Behold," saith he to the Corinthians, "the third time I am ready to come unto you, for your edifying. For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not; lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; and lest, when I come, my God will humble me among you, and that I should bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented." 2 Cor. xii. 14, 19—21.

We shall close this chapter by proposing the following queries, which may be reasonably grounded upon the preceding passage. If the natural and supernatural talents of St. Paul; if his zeal, his diligence, and his apostolic authority, were insufficient to engage his flock to conduct themselves as followers of Christ; if their want of piety drew from him tears of lamentation, and obliged him to renew his painful efforts with redoubled solicitude; can those pastors be said to possess the spirit of the gospel, who behold with indifference the disorders of that falling church which Christ has purchased with his own blood? And if the extraordinary labours of St. Paul were not sufficient fully to answer the design of the sacred ministry, is it not presumption indeed to imagine, that our trivial services are sufficiently complete?

CHAPTER VIII.

A FURTHER REPLY TO THE SAME OBJECTION.

WHEN we attack a prejudice that is obstinately defended, it is frequently as needful to multiply arguments, as it is necessary in a siege to multiply assaults. Pursuing this method, we shall endeavour upon new grounds to

establish the doctrine contended for in the two last chapters.

1. After exhorting Timothy to labour without ceasing, St. Paul assigns the following reason for such injunction :— “ Know,” saith he, “ that in the last times ” of the Christian church, “ men ” who make a profession of faith “ shall be lovers of their own selves, despisers of those that are good ; lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. Now, if Timothy was exhorted to use all diligence in opposing those evils which were then only making their approach, is it reasonable that we should be remiss, who are unhappy enough to see those “ last times ” in which the decay of piety predicted by the apostle is become universal ? On the contrary, is not this the moment in which we should strenuously resist the overflowings of ungodliness, and fortify those who are not yet swept away by the impetuous torrent ?

2. When the great apostle benevolently carried the word of God to sinners of every different nation, he thereby armed against himself the authority of magistrates and priests, as well Jewish as pagan. His universal philanthropy exposed him to the most cruel persecutions. Thousands, and ten thousands, were set in array against him ; and the inhabitants of every kingdom seemed determined to resist or destroy him in his spiritual progress. He saw these surrounding dangers, but he saw them without discovering any symptom of fear ; and rather than discontinue his painful labours, he cheerfully proceeded to encounter every threatening evil. We, on the contrary, are appointed to build up the children of the kingdom in “ their most holy faith.” And shall we labour less, because we can labour with less danger ? Shall we neglect the duties of our sacred function, because our superiors in church and state permit us to convert sinners, command us to preach the gospel, erect us temples for the public celebration of divine worship, and allow us salaries, that our ministry may never be interrupted by secular cares ? The ministerial services, which St. Paul performed with such unabating zeal when his reward was imprisonment

and stripes, must we be engaged to discharge by emoluments and honours? And, after all, shall we limit our constrained obedience precisely to that point which will merely secure us from public deposition and disgrace?

3. What was the error of Demas; a man as notorious by his fall among the evangelists, as Judas among the apostles? Demas "loved this present world," (2 Tim. iv. 10,) and, ceasing to imitate the diligence of St. Paul, ungratefully left him to labour almost without a second. And will unfaithful evangelists presume, that they may imitate without fear the apostasy of Demas, and renounce with impunity the example of St. Paul? If such is their unhappy persuasion, we submit the following queries to their serious consideration. Are the souls of men less valuable; is sin of any kind less detestable, or the law of God less severe, in the present day, than in the earlier ages of the Christian church? Have pastors a right to be remiss, while the night of incredulity is blackening around them? Are the attacks of antichristian philosophers less frequent and audacious at present, than in former times? Or, finally, is the appearance of our omnipotent Judge no longer expected in the world?

4. If the apostles and primitive pastors have removed many threatening impediments out of our way; if they have procured for us our present advantages, by the most amazing exertions, and at the prodigious price of their blood; surely it can never be imagined, that they acted with so much resolution, and suffered with so much constancy, that we might become the indolent readers of their unparalleled history. Was it not rather, that, animated with a becoming sense of their great example, we might make the highest improvement of our inestimable privileges?

5. The mountains are now laid low, the valleys are filled up, the crooked ways are made straight, and we have only to carry that salvation to sinners for which such wonderful preparations have been made. And are we negligent in running on the errands of everlasting love? And are we backward in bearing the happiest tidings to the most hap-

less of creatures? No excuse then can possibly be made for this coldness, except that which the author of "Emilius" has put into the mouth of a fictitious character: "Of what importance is it to me," says the vicar Savoyard, "what becomes of the wicked? I am but little concerned in their future destiny." An excuse for the want of zeal, which can never be pleaded without reflecting the utmost disgrace upon humanity.

6. Ye pastors of a flock ever prone to wander! choose whom you will follow, philosophers or apostles; the indefatigable zeal of St. Paul, or the cruel indifference of the sceptical vicar. But, if you take the latter for your model, we solemnly entreat you to lay aside the profession, while you so shamefully renounce the duties, of the holy ministry. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." Ezek. xxxiii. 11. With you, however, it is a matter of very inconsiderable importance, whether the wicked be finally saved or destroyed. And yet, careless as you are of its weal or woe, you presume to appear as ministers of the church, and as pastors over that little flock for which the good Shepherd was content to lay down his life. To rank with the watchful attendants of the fold is an honour of which you are altogether unworthy; but you may with propriety be counted in the number of those ungrateful hirelings who "care not for the sheep." John x. 13.

8. It is true you are not without companions, as well ancient as modern. You have Hophni and Phinehas, Gehazi and Balaam, to keep you in countenance; you have the prophets of Jezebel to plead in your favour, and every worldly ecclesiastic of the present day to approve your choice. But apostolical men will resolutely withstand you, like Elisha and his master, in the cause of deserted truth.

Ye slothful domestics of the most diligent Master! ye cruel attendants of the tenderest Shepherd! say, have ye never heard that Master crying out, with the voice of affection, "Feed my sheep?" John xxi 17. Have ye not seen him conducting his flock to an evangelical pas-

ture, in the temple, in synagogues, in villages, in houses, in deserts, on the sea-shore, and on the tops of mountains? He anxiously sought out the miserable. Truth was the guide of his way, charity accompanied his steps, and his path was marked with blessings. His secret efforts were more painful than his public labours: he publicly instructed through the day, but he privately agonized in prayer through the night. His first disciples were anxious to tread in the steps of their adorable Master. They exercised their ministry within sight of torments and death. And will you dare to neglect it now the cry of persecution is hushed? Will you equally despise both the promises and threatenings of the gospel? Will you hasten the times of antichrist, by an antichristian conduct? And when the Son of man shall come, shall he find you trampling under foot the gospel of his grace? or shall he surprise you distributing cards round the tables of your friends, rather than earnestly inviting those friends to the table of your Lord?

O that we could prevail upon you to stand in your proper post, and act in conformity to your professional character! While you dream of security, you are surrounded with the most alarming dangers. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth; having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplications for all saints," and for the ministers of the gospel in particular, "that they may open their mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel," and to diffuse abroad "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph. vi. 14—19; iii. 8. Thus, quitting yourselves like men in this sacred warfare, after steadily resisting, you shall finally overcome all the strength of the enemy, "by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left;" 2 Cor. vi. 7; till, having

weathered out the evil day, continuing "faithful unto death," ye shall be rewarded with "a crown of" everlasting "life." Rev. ii. 10.

CHAPTER IX.

A FURTHER REFUTATION OF THE SAME OBJECTION.

1. WHEN we see a number of persons in perilous circumstances, charity constrains us to make our first efforts in favour of those who appear to be in the most imminent danger. Such are unholy Christians. Sinful heathens are doubtless in danger; obstinate Jews in still greater peril; but impenitent Christians are in a situation abundantly more lamentable than either, since they offend against clearer light and knowledge, equally inattentive to the most gracious promises on the one hand, and the most terrible menaces on the other. To sin with the new testament in our hand, and with the sound of the gospel in our ears; to sin with the seal of baptism in our forehead, and the name of Christ in our lips; to sin, and receive the holy communion; to ratify and break the most solemn engagements; what is this, but earnestly labouring out our own damnation, and plunging ourselves into those abysses of wretchedness which pagans and Jews are unable to fathom? How eagerly, then, should every believer attempt to rescue his falling brethren! and especially, how anxious should they be to arrest those leaders of the blind who are drawing on their followers to the brink of perdition! As this is one of those arguments upon which the truth here pleaded for must principally rest, we shall consider it in the several points of view under which it is presented to us in the gospel.

2. The commission of St. Paul was particularly directed to the gentiles; yet, before he visited their benighted nations, he judged it his duty to make a full and free offer of the everlasting gospel to the people of the Jews. For the conduct of the apostle in this respect the

following reasons are to be assigned:—First, the promises pertained to the Jews in a peculiar manner. Rom. ix. 4. Secondly, the children of Abraham, according to the flesh, had a more threatening prospect before them, in case of final impenitence, than any other people upon earth: “Tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the gentile.” Rom. ii. 9.

3. The same reasons, though chiefly the latter, are still to be urged, why the ministers of Christ should principally labour among Christians. For, if sinners of the circumcision shall be more severely punished than the ignorant heathen, so the apostle declares, that sinners who are baptized into the name of Christ shall be treated with still greater rigour than impenitent Jews. “He that despised Moses’s law,” saith he, “died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment,” then, “suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” Heb. x. 28, 29. If this consideration was accompanied with its due effect, it would fire us with the most unconquerable zeal for the salvation of negligent Christians.

4. In one of the last discourses our Lord addressed to the cities of Galilee, we find him reading over them this dreadful sentence of condemnation: “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which,” by thy religious privileges, “art exalted unto heaven, shalt,” for the non-improvement of them, “be brought down to hell.” Yea, “it shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the land of Sodom,” which has been already consumed with fire from above, “than for thee.” Matt. xi. 21—24.

5. To draw the just consequences from this affecting menace, we must recollect, that, when it was pronounced, the inhabitants of the above-mentioned cities had been

favoured but for a very short interval with the ministry of Christ and his messengers ; and if the death and resurrection of Jesus were afterwards published among them, it is more than probable, that these important facts were published only in a desultory and transient way. Nevertheless, the sinners of Capernaum were thought worthy of greater punishment than the sinners of Sodom. Hence we conclude, that if the sinners of London, Paris, Rome, and Geneva have hardened themselves against the truths of the gospel for a much longer continuance than the citizens of Capernaum were permitted to do, there is every reason to apprehend, that their sentence will not only be more dreadful than the sentence of Sodom, but abundantly less tolerable than that which was pronounced upon the inhabitants of Galilee.

6. While we consider the various proportions in which future punishment shall be administered to the wicked of different classes, we may turn to those remarkable expressions of St. Peter and St. Paul : “ If after having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” 2 Peter ii. 20, 21. “ If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Heb. x. 26, 27. These declarations assist us to discover the true ground of that apostolic exhortation with which we shall close this chapter : “ Of some have compassion, making a difference ; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.” Jude 22, 23.

From this last view of the subject, we may perceive into how dangerous an error those persons are fallen who presume to object against imitating the zeal of St. Paul.

CHAPTER X.

A FIFTH OBJECTION ANSWERED.

THE solidity of the preceding remarks may be acknowledged by many pastors, who will still excuse themselves from copying the example of St. Paul.

"It is unreasonable," they will say, "to require that we should preach the word of God, in season and out of season, as St. Paul once did, and as Timothy was afterwards exhorted to do. We find it, in this day, a matter of difficulty to prepare any public address, that may be either acceptable to the people, or honourable to ourselves."

To this objection we return the following replies :—

1. He who spake as never man spake rejected the arts of our modern orators, delivering his discourses in a style of easy simplicity and unaffected zeal.

2. We do not find that St. Paul and the other apostles imposed upon themselves the troublesome servitude of penning down their discourses. And we are well assured that when the seventy and the twelve were commissioned to publish the gospel, no directions of this nature were given in either case.

3. St. Paul gives the following pastoral instructions to Timothy :—"Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them. Take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine ; continue in them : for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Tim. iv. 13—16. "Preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 2. Now, had it ever entered into the mind of the apostle, that it would be proper for pastors to compose their sermons in the manner of rhetoricians, and to deliver them as public orators, he would most probably have given some intimation of this to his disciple. In such case, he would have held out to his pupil in divinity some instruc-

tion of the following nature :—" O Timothy, my son, I have frequently commanded thee to labour in the work of the Lord according to my example ; but as thou art not an apostle, properly so called, and hast not received the gift of languages, I advise thee to write over thy sermons as correctly as possible. And after this do not fail to rehearse them before a mirror, till thou art able to repeat them with freedom and grace ; so that when thou art called upon public duty, thou mayest effectually secure the approbation of thine auditors. Furthermore : when thou art about to visit any distant churches, lay up in thy portmanteau the choicest of thy sermons ; and wherever thou art, take care to have, at least, one discourse about thee, that thou mayest be prepared against any sudden emergency, and never appear unfurnished in the eyes of the people." The idea of such a passage in the epistles of St. Paul, whether public or private, is too absurd to be endured.

4. If advocates, after hastily considering a question of difficulty, are ready to plead the cause of their client before a court of judicature, can it be possible that, after several years of meditation and study, a minister should still be unprepared to plead the cause of piety before a plain assembly of his unlearned parishioners ?

5. When we are deeply interested in a subject of the last importance, do we think it necessary to draw up our arguments in an orderly manner upon paper, before we attempt to deliver our sentiments upon the matter in hand ? Are not the love and penetration of a parent sufficient to dictate such advice as is suited to the different tempers and conditions of his children ? After perceiving the house of our neighbour on fire, we do not withdraw to our closet to prepare a variety of affecting arguments, by way of engaging him to save both himself and his family from the flames. In such case, a lively conviction of our neighbour's danger, and an ardent desire to rescue him from it, afford us greater powers of natural eloquence than any rules of art can furnish us with.

6. Horace observes, that neither matter nor method will be wanting upon a well-digested subject :—

*Cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.*

With how much facility, then, may suitable expressions be expected to follow those animating sentiments which are inspired by an ardent love to God and man; especially when subjects of such universal concern are agitated as death and redemption, judgment and eternity! Upon such occasions, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak;" "nor will the preacher be able to repeat a tenth part of the truths which God has communicated to him, while meditating upon his text." Act of Synod, chap. xl. If malice can furnish those persons with an inexhaustible fund of conversation who delight in scandal, how much more may we suppose the charity of a pastor to furnish him with an inexhaustible fund of exhortation, instruction, and comfort!

7. It has been a plea with many ministers of the gospel, that they neglect to proclaim that gospel during six days in the week, lest they should be unprepared to address their parishioners with propriety upon the seventh. With teachers who are thus scrupulously tenacious of their own reputation, we may justly be allowed to reason in the following manner:—"To what purpose are all those oratorical appendages with which you are so studious to adorn your discourses? and 'who hath required' all 'this' useless labour 'at your hand?'" Isaiah i. 11, 12. If a servant, after being charged by his master with a message of the utmost importance, should betake himself to his chamber, and defer the execution of it day after day, would not such a delay be esteemed an unpardonable neglect? Or if he should attempt to apologize for the omission, by alleging that he had been busily engaged in learning to repeat with precision the message he had received, and to move upon his errand with dignity and grace, would not such an excuse be regarded as an instance of the highest presumption and folly? And can we imagine that our heavenly Master will overlook that neglect in his public messengers which would appear, in the conduct of a private domestic, so justly condemnable?

8. What advantage has accrued to the church by

renouncing the apostolic method of publishing the gospel? We have indolence and artifice, in the place of sincerity and vigilance. Those public discourses which were anciently the effects of conviction and zeal are now become the weekly exercises of learning and art. "We believe, and therefore speak," (2 Cor. iv. 13,) is an expression that has grown entirely obsolete among modern pastors; but nothing is more common among us than to say, "As we have sermons prepared upon a variety of subjects, we are ready to deliver them as opportunity offers."

9. Many inconveniences arise from that method of preaching which is generally adopted in the present day. While the physician of souls is labouring to compose a learned dissertation upon some plain passage of scripture, he has but little leisure to visit those languishing patients who need his immediate assistance. He thinks it sufficient to attend them every sabbath-day, in the place appointed for public duty; but he recollects not, that those to whom his counsel is peculiarly necessary are the very persons who refuse to meet him there. His unprofitable employments at home leave him no opportunity to go in pursuit of his wandering sheep. He meets them, it is true, at stated periods, in the common fold; but it is equally true that, during every successive interval, he discovers the coldest indifference with respect to their spiritual welfare. From this unbecoming conduct of many a minister, one would naturally imagine, that the flock were rather called to seek out their indolent pastor, than that he was purposely hired to pursue every straying sheep.

10. The most powerful nerve of the sacred ministry is ecclesiastical discipline: but this nerve is absolutely cut asunder by the method of which we now speak. When a pastor withdraws, fatigued, from his study, imagining that he has honourably acquitted himself, with regard to his people, he is too apt to neglect that vigilant inspection into families upon which the discipline of the church depends. Such a spiritual instructor may justly be compared to a vain-glorious pedagogue, who, after drawing up a copy, and adorning it for several days together with

all the embellishments of his art, should yet imagine, that he had admirably performed his part, in preparing it, at length, for his scholars, without any visible defects. And what could reasonably be expected from the pupils of such a teacher, but that, fearing neither scholastic discipline, nor particular inspection, they should neglect to transcribe what their master, with so much unprofitable toil, had produced?

11. Since the orator's art has taken place of the energy of faith, what happy effect has it produced upon the minds of men? Have we discovered more frequent conversions among us? Are formal professors more generally seized with a religious fear? Are libertines more universally constrained to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts ii. 37. Do the wicked depart from the church to bewail their transgressions in private, and believers to visit the mourners in their affliction? Is it not rather to be lamented, that we are at this day equally distant from Christian charity and primitive simplicity?

12. Reading over a variety of approved sermons is generally supposed to be preaching the gospel. If this were really so, we need but look out some school-boy of a tolerable capacity, and, after instructing him to read over, with proper emphasis and gesture, the sermons of Tillotson, Sherlock, or Saurin, we shall have made him an excellent minister of the word of God. But if preaching the gospel is, to publish among sinners that repentance and salvation which we have experienced in ourselves; if it is to imitate a penitent slave, who, freed from misery and iron, returns to the companions of his former slavery, declaring the generosity of their prince, and persuading them to sue for mercy; if this is to publish the gospel of peace, then it is evident, that experience and sympathy are more necessary to the due performance of this work than all the accuracy and elocution that can possibly be acquired.

13. When this sacred experience, and this generous sympathy, began to lose their prevalence in the church, their place was gradually supplied by the trifling substi-

tutes of study and affectation. Carnal prudence has now for many ages solicitously endeavoured to adapt itself to the taste of the wise and the learned. But while "the offence of the cross" is avoided, Gal. v. 11, neither the wise nor the ignorant are effectually converted. The gospel is abundantly better suited to the poor in spirit, than to those who value themselves as men of sagacity and science. "I thank thee, O Father," said the lowly Jesus, "that thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matt. xi. 25. These "babes," however, in the language of Christ, are the very persons who have been usually neglected by us, for the mere gratification of reputed sages. Alas! how many thousand proofs do we require to convince us, that the wisdom of this world will continue to trample under foot the pearl of the gospel, though, in order to secure its reception, it should be presented among the artificial pearls of a vain philosophy?

14. In consequence of the same error, the ornaments of theatrical eloquence have been sought after with a shameful solicitude. And what has been the fruit of so much useless toil? Preachers, after all, have played their part with much less applause than comedians; and their curious auditors are still running from the pulpit to the stage, for the pleasure of hearing fables repeated with a degree of sensibility which the messengers of truth can neither feel nor feign.

Notwithstanding the above remarks have been expressed in the most pointed manner, we mean not to insinuate, that the errors already exposed are the only mistakes to be guarded against. Extremes of every kind are to be avoided with equal care. We condemn the carnal prudence of Christian orators; but we as sincerely reprobate the conduct of those enthusiasts who, under pretence that Christ has promised to continue with his disciples to the end of the world, exhibit the reveries of a heated imagination for the truths of the gospel. Too many of these deluded fanatics are found, who, taking their own slothfulness and presumption for the effects of a lively faith and an apostolic confidence, repeatedly affront the Almighty, and

justly offend those candid hearers who are least disposed to take offence. "Offences will" undoubtedly "come;" but it behoves us to make a just distinction between the real "offence of the cross," and that which is given by an unlicensed presumption on our own part.

If we are honoured with the pastoral office, let us consider the holy scriptures as an inexhaustible mine of sacred treasures. In the law of the Lord let us meditate day and night. Before we attempt to deliver evangelical truths in public, let it be our first care to penetrate our hearts in private with an adequate sense of those truths. Let us arrange them in the most suitable order; let us adduce and compare the several passages of sacred writ which appear to support or explain the particular doctrines we mean to insist upon; but, above all, joining faith and prayer to calm meditation, after becoming masters of our subject, let us humbly ask of God that *καρρησια*, that lively and forcible elocution, which flows from the unction of grace.

And here, instead of resting contented with barely requesting, we should labour to acquire, what we seek by frequently stirring up the gift that is in us. Let us embrace every opportunity of exhorting both believers and catechumens. Let us carry, with unwearied constancy, instruction to the ignorant, and consolation to the afflicted. Let us be faithful in reproving sinners of every class, and diligent in training up the children of our parish.

It is necessary indeed to be scrupulously cautious, lest we abuse the liberty of preaching from meditation, by becoming followers of those who are more worthy of censure than imitation. There are pastors of this kind who, having acquired a good degree of spiritual knowledge, and a wonderful facility of expression, unhappily begin to pique themselves upon appearing before a numerous assembly without any previous study. Conscious of their own ability, these self-sufficient preachers make little or no preparation for one of the most solemn duties that can possibly be discharged. They hasten to a crowded auditory without any apparent concern; and, coming down from the pulpit with an air of the same easy con-

fidence with which they ascended it, contentedly return to that habitual listlessness which has only been interrupted by the external performance of a necessary work. Alas! if these presuming pastors could be prevailed upon to write over their sermons, to how much better purpose might they thus employ their hours, than by heedlessly trifling them away in frivolous conversation and shameful inactivity!

It is not to imitate examples of this nature that we solicit the ministers of Christ to recover those hours which are usually employed in composing their weekly discourses. How many are the important occupations of which the faithful pastor has his daily choice! The wicked are to be reclaimed, and the righteous established. Hope must be administered to the fearful, and courage to the tempted. The weak are to be strengthened, and the strong to be exercised. The sick must be supported, and the dying prepared for dissolution. By frequent pastoral visits to hamlets, schools, and private houses, the indefatigable minister should continually be moving through the several parts of his parish, discovering the condition of those entrusted to his care, and regularly supplying the necessities of his flock, diffusing all around instruction and reproof, exhortation and comfort. To sum up his duties in a single sentence, he should cause the light that is in him to shine out in every possible direction before the ignorant and the learned, the rich and the poor; making the salvation of mankind his principal pursuit, and the glory of God his ultimate aim.

Thus, after having faithfully performed the work of an evangelist, when he is about to be removed from his charge by death, or by any other providential appointment, he may take an affectionate leave of his people, and say, "Remember," my children, that, while I have sojourned among you, "I have not ceased to warn every one of you night * and day;" and if my word has not always been accompanied "with tears, Acts xx. 31, yet it has constantly flowed from sincerity and affection.

* It is highly reasonable that pastors should give evening instructions to those who have been engaged, through the course of the day, in their different callings. This season, whether it be in the mere

CHAPTER XI.

A REPLY TO THE FIFTH AND LAST OBJECTION WHICH
MAY BE URGED AGAINST THE PORTRAIT OF ST. PAUL.

THOSE persons who have already so earnestly resisted the truths for which we contend, will not fail to exclaim, in the last place, by way of an unanswerable argument, "What you require of pastors is unreasonable in the highest degree. If they are indeed called to labour for the salvation of souls with the zeal and assiduity of St. Paul, the holy ministry must be regarded as the most painful of all professions, and, of consequence, our pulpits will be shortly unoccupied."

M. Ostervald, who foresaw this objection, has completely answered it in his third source of the corruption which reigns among Christians. "It will not fail to be objected," says this venerable author, "that if none were to be admitted to holy orders, except those who are possessed of every necessary qualification, there could not possibly be procured a sufficient number of pastors for the supply of our churches. To which I answer, that it would be abundantly better to expose ourselves to this inconvenience, than to violate the express laws of the written word. A small number of chosen pastors is preferable to a multitude of unqualified teachers." One Elijah was more powerful than all the prophets of Baal. "At all hazards, we must adhere to the command of God, and leave the event to Providence. But, in reality, this dearth of pastors is not so generally to be apprehended. To reject those candidates for holy orders whose labours in the church would be altogether fruitless, is undoubtedly a work of piety; and such alone would be repulsed by the apprehension of a severe

dreary or the more pleasing part of the year, is peculiarly suited to works of devotion. Such a custom might, at least, prevent many young persons from mixing with that kind of company, and frequenting those places, which would tend to alienate their minds from religion and virtue.

scrutiny and an exact discipline. Others, on the contrary, who are in a condition to fulfil the duties of the sacred office, would take encouragement from this exactness and severity, and the ministry would every day be rendered more respectable in the world." Behold an answer truly worthy an apostolical man !

If it still be objected, by the generality of pastors, that what we require is as unreasonable as it is unusual ; permit me to ask you, my lukewarm brethren, whether it be not necessary that you should use the same diligence in your sacred profession with which your neighbours are accustomed to labour in their worldly vocations and pursuits ?

The fisherman prepares a variety of lines, hooks, and baits ; he knows the places, the seasons, and even the hours, that are most favourable to his employment ; nor will he refuse to throw his line several hundred times in a day. If he is disappointed in one place, he cheerfully betakes himself to another ; and if his ill success is of any long continuance, he will associate with those who are greater masters of his art. Tell me then, ye pastors, who make the business of a fisherman the amusement of many an idle hour, do ye really imagine that less ardour and perseverance are necessary to prepare souls for heaven than to catch trout for your tables ?

The huntsman rejoices in expectation of the promised chase. He denies himself some hours of usual repose, that he may hasten abroad in pursuit of his game. He seeks it with unwearied attention, and follows it from field to field with increasing ardour. He labours up the mountain ; he rushes down the precipice ; he penetrates the thickest woods, and overleaps the most threatening obstacles. He practises the wildest gestures, and makes use of the most extravagant language ; endeavouring, by every possible means, to animate both dogs and men in the furious pursuit. He counts the fatigues of the chase in the number of its pleasures ; and through the whole insignificant business of the day, he acts with as much resolution and fervour as though he had undertaken one of the noblest enterprises in the world.

The fowler with equal eagerness pursues his different game. From stubble to stubble, and from cover to cover, he urges his way. He pushes through the stubborn brake, and takes his way along the pathless dingle; he traverses the gloomy mountain, or wanders devious over the barren heath; and, after carrying arms all day, if a few trifling birds reward his toil, returns rejoicing home.

Come, ye fishers of men! who, notwithstanding your consecration to God, are frequently seen to partake of these contemptible diversions; come and answer by your conduct to the following questions. Is the flock committed to your charge less estimable than the fowl which you so laboriously pursue? Or are you less interested in the salvation of your people, than in the destruction of those unhappy quadrupeds, which give you so much silly fatigue, and afford you so much brutal pleasure?

Permit me, still further, to carry on my argument. Was the panting animal, which usually accompanies your steps in the last-mentioned exercise, incautiously to plunge into a dangerous pit; though faint with the labours of the day, and now on your return, would you carelessly leave him to perish? Would you not, rather, use every effort to extricate him from apparent death? Could you even sleep or eat, till you had afforded him every possible assistance? And yet, you eat, you sleep, you visit; nay, it may be, you dance, you hunt, you shoot, and that without the least inquietude, while your flocks are rushing on from sin to sin, and falling from precipice to precipice. Ah! if a thousand souls are but comparable to the vilest animal, and if these are heedlessly straying through the ways of perdition, may we not reasonably exhort you to use every effort in preserving them from the most alarming danger, and in securing them from the horrors of everlasting death?

But, passing by those amusements which so generally engage your attention, let me reason with you from one of the most laborious occupations of life. You are called to be "good soldiers of Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. ii. 3. And can you possibly imagine, that less resolution and patience

are required in a spiritual warrior, than in an earthly soldier? Behold the mercenary, who, for little more than food and clothing, is preparing to go on his twentieth campaign! Whether he is called to melt under the line, or to freeze beneath the pole, he undertakes the appointed expedition with an air of intrepidity and zeal. Loaded with the weapons of his warfare, he is harassed out with painful marches; and after enduring the excessive fatigues of the day, he makes his bed upon the rugged earth, or perhaps passes the comfortless night under arms. In the day of battle, he advances against the enemy amid a shower of bullets, and is anxious, in the most tremendous scenes, to give proofs of an unconquerable resolution. If, through the dangers of the day, he escapes unhurt, it is but to run the hazard of another encounter; perhaps, to force an entrenchment, or to press through a breach. Nothing, however, discourages him; but, covered with wounds, he goes on unrepining to meet the mortal blow. All this he suffers, and all this he performs, in the service of his superiors, and with little hope of advancement on his own part.

Behold this dying veteran, ye timorous soldiers of an omnipotent prince! and blush at your want of spiritual intrepidity. Are you not engaged in the cause of humanity, and in the service of God? Are you not commissioned to rescue captive souls from all the powers of darkness? Do you not fight beneath his scrutinizing eye who is King of kings, and Lord of lords? Are you not contending within sight of eternal rewards, and with the hope of an unfading inheritance? And will you complain of difficulties, or tremble at danger? Will you not only avoid the heat of the engagement, but even dare to withdraw from the standard of your sovereign Lord? Let me lead you again into the field; let me drag you back to the charge; or, rather, let me shame your cowardice, by pointing you to those resolute commanders who have formerly signalized themselves under the banners of your Prince. Emulate their example, and you shall share their rewards.

But if, hitherto, you have neither contemplated the beauty, nor experienced the energy, of those truths by

which St. Paul was animated to such acts of heroism ; it is in vain that we exhort you to “ shine ” among the foremost ranks of Christians, “ as ” inextinguishable “ lights, holding ” up, against every enemy, as “ a two-edged sword,” Heb. iv. 12, “ the word of ” everlasting “ life.” Philip. ii. 15, 16. Instead of this, it will be necessary to place before you the excellence and efficacy of this apostle’s doctrines, together with the infinite advantages which they procure to those who cordially embrace them. And this we shall endeavour to do in the second part of this work. Meanwhile, we will conclude this first part with a short exhortation from St. Chrysostom’s fifty-ninth sermon upon St. Matthew : “ Since the present life is a continual warfare ; since we are at all times surrounded by an host of enemies, let us vigorously oppose them, as our royal Chieftain is pleased to command. Let us fear neither labour, nor wounds, nor death. Let us all conspire mutually to assist and defend one another. And let our magnanimity be such as may add firmness to the most resolute, and give courage to the most cowardly.”

THE
PORTRAIT OF ST PAUL.

PART II.

THE DOCTRINES OF AN EVANGELICAL PASTOR.

THE minister of the present age, being destitute of Christian piety, is neither able to preach nor clearly to comprehend the truths of the gospel. In general, he contents himself with superficially declaring certain attributes of the supreme Being, while he is fearful of speaking too largely of grace or its operations, lest he should be suspected of enthusiasm. He declaims against some enormous vice, or displays the beauty of some social virtue. He affects to establish the doctrines of heathen philosophers; and it were to be wished that he always carried his morality to as high a pitch as some of the most celebrated of those sages. If he ever proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ, it is but in a cursory way, and chiefly when he is obliged to it, by the return of particular days. He himself continues the same through all seasons; and the cross of Christ would be entirely laid aside, unless the temporal prince, more orthodox than the minister, had appointed the passion of our Lord to be the preacher's theme during certain solemnities of the church.

With the evangelical pastor it is wholly otherwise. "Jesus Christ," he is able to say with St. Paul, "sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For

it is written, I will destroy the "vain "wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the" false "understanding of the prudent. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that the world by" this "wisdom," this boasted philosophy, "knew not God," but rested in materialism and idolatry, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. i. 17—21. The preaching of the true minister, which commonly passes for folly in a degenerate world, is that through which God employs his power for the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers. It comprehends all that is revealed in the old and new testament; but the subjects on which it is chiefly employed are, the precepts of the decalogue, and the truths of the apostles' creed. They may be reduced to four points: 1. True repentance toward God. 2. A lively faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 3. The sweet hope which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in the hearts of believers. 4. That Christian charity which is the abundant source of every good work. In a word, the good pastor preaches repentance, faith, hope, and charity. These four virtues include all others. These are the four pillars which support the glorious temple of which St. Paul and St. Peter make the following mention: "Ye are God's building." 1 Cor. iii. 9. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." 1 Peter ii. 5.

By searching into the solidity of these four supports, we may observe how vast a difference there is between the materials of which they are composed, and that untempered mortar with which the ministers of the present day are striving to erect a showy building upon a sandy foundation.

THE EVANGELICAL PASTOR PREACHES TRUE REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD.

THE true minister, convinced both by revelation and experience, that Jesus Christ alone is able to recover diseased souls, employs every effort to bring sinners into the presence of this heavenly Physician, that they may obtain of him spiritual health and salvation. He is fully per-

suaded that he who is not weary and heavy laden will never apply for relief; that he who is not poor in spirit will constantly despise the riches of the gospel; and that they who are unacquainted with their danger will turn an inattentive ear to the loudest warnings of grace. His first care, then, is to press upon his hearers the necessity of an unfeigned repentance, that, by breaking the reed of their vain confidence, he may constrain them, with the poor, the miserable, the blind, and the naked, to fall before the throne of divine justice; whence, after seeing themselves condemned by the law of God, without any ability to deliver their own souls, he is conscious they will have recourse to the throne of grace, entreating, like the penitent publican, to be "justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom. iii. 24. It is in this state of humiliation and compunction of heart that sinners are enabled to experience the happy effects of that evangelical repentance which is well defined in the fourteenth chapter of the Helvetic Confession: "By repentance," say our pious reformers, "we mean that sorrow, or that displeasure of soul, which is excited in a sinner, by the word and Spirit of God," &c. "By this new sensibility he is first made to discover his natural corruption, and his actual transgressions. His heart is pierced with sincere distress; he deplores them before God; he confesses them with confusion, but without reserve; he abhors them with holy indignation; he seriously resolves from the present moment to reform his conduct, and religiously apply himself to the practice of every virtue during the remainder of his life. Such is true repentance: it consists, at once, in resolutely renouncing the devil, with every thing that is sinful; and in sincerely cleaving to God, with every thing that is truly good. But we expressly say, this repentance is the mere gift of God, and can never be effected by our own power. 2 Tim. ii. 25."

It appears by this definition that our reformers distinguished that by the name of "repentance," which many theologians have called the "awaking" of a soul from the sleep of carnal security, and which others have fre-

quently termed "conversion." But if sinners understand and obtain the disposition here described, no true minister will be over anxious that they should express it in any particular form of words.

HOW SIN AND THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE ENTERED
INTO THE WORLD.

OBSERVE the account which the evangelical minister gives, after Moses and St. Paul, of the manner in which that dreadful infection made its way into the world, that corrupt nature, that "old man," that "body of death," which Christ, the seed of the woman, came to destroy: "When the" tempted "woman saw that the fruit of the tree," which God had forbidden her to touch, "was pleasant to the eyes, good for food, and to be desired to make one wise, she took thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Gen. iii. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 14. Thus entered into the fountain-head of nature that moral evil, that complicated malady, that "lust of the flesh," that "lust of the eyes," and that "pride of life," 1 John ii. 16, which the second Adam came to crucify in the flesh, and which is still daily crucified in the members of his mystical body.

If Jesus Christ never publicly discoursed concerning the entry of sin into the world, it was because his sermons were addressed to a people who had been long before instructed in a matter of so great importance. On this account, he simply proposed himself to Israel, as that promised Messiah, that Son of God and Son of man, who was about to repair the error of the first Adam, by becoming the resurrection and the life of all those who should believe in his name.

St. Paul was very differently circumstanced, when labouring among those nations which were unacquainted with the fall, except by uncertain and corrupt tradition. Behold the wisdom with which he unfolds to the heathen that fundamental doctrine which was not contested among the Jews: "The first man Adam," the head of the human species, "was made a living soul;" but Jesus Christ, "the last Adam, was made a quickening spirit:" and he

also is the head of the human species ; for “the head of every man is Christ.” 1 Cor. xi. 3. “The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy” (worldly) ; “and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” (regenerate). “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we” whose souls are already regenerate “shall also bear the” complete “image of the heavenly,” when “this mortal shall have put on immortality ;” for the “flesh and blood” which we have from the first Adam “cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” 1 Cor. xv. 45—53.

As human pride is continually exalting itself against this humiliating doctrine, so the true minister as constantly repeats it, crying out, in the language of this great apostle, “All” unregenerate men are “under sin ; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God ; they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; the way of peace have they not known ; there is no fear of God before their eyes ; we know that whatsoever things the law saith,” the natural or the Mosaic law, “it saith to them that are under the law ; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Rom. iii. 9—19. “There is no difference ; for” as “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” so all equally need the merits and assistance of “Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” Rom. iii. 22—25. All those therefore who, neglecting Christ, rely upon “the works of the law, are under the curse ;” and all their endeavours to deliver themselves by their imperfect obedience are totally vain : “for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Thus, by denouncing maledictions as dreadful as the thunders from mount Sinai against every act of disobedience, “the law” becomes “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Gal. iii. 10, 24.

THIS DOCTRINE IS MAINTAINED BY ALL THE CHRISTIAN
CHURCHES.

WHEN an evangelical minister insists upon the fall, the corruption, and the danger of unregenerate man, he acts in conformity to the acknowledged opinions of the purest churches. As I chiefly write for the French protestants, I shall here cite the confession of faith now in use among the French churches. "We believe," say they, in the articles ix., x., and xi. of their creed, "that man, having been created after the image of God, fell, by his own fault, from the grace he had received; and thus became alienated from God, who is the fountain of holiness and felicity; so that having his mind blinded, his heart depraved, and his whole nature corrupted, he lost all his innocence. We believe that the whole race of Adam is infected with this contagion, that in his person we forfeited every blessing, and sunk into a state of universal want and malediction. We believe also that sin," &c., "is a perverseness producing the fruits of malice and rebellion."

The reformed churches of Switzerland make as humiliating a confession. "Man," say they, "by an abuse of his liberty, suffering himself to be seduced by the serpent, forsook his primitive integrity. Thus he rendered himself subject to sin, death, and every kind of misery; and such as the first man became by the fall, such are all his descendants. Rom. v. 12—21. When we say, man is subject to sin, we mean by sin, that corruption of nature which, from the fall of the first man, has been transmitted from father to son; vicious passions, an aversion to that which is good, an inclination to that which is evil, a disposition to malice, a bold defiance and contempt of God. Behold the unhappy effects of that corruption by which we are so wholly debilitated, that of ourselves we are not able to do, nor even to choose, that which is good." *Helvetic Confession*, chap. viii.

Every man may find in himself sufficient proofs of these painful truths. "God is the creator of man," say the fathers who composed the synod of Berne, "and he intended that man should be entirely devoted to his God."

But this is no longer his nature ; since he looks to creatures, to his own pleasure, and makes an idol of himself." Acts of Synod, chap. viii.

This doctrine is also set forth in the Augsburg confession ; as well as in articles ix. and x. of the church of England, where it is expressed in the following terms :— "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, but is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, whereby he is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth alway contrary to the spirit ; and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." "The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God ; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

Nothing less than a lively conviction of the corruption, weakness, and misery described in these confessions of faith, can properly dispose a man for evangelical repentance.

WITHOUT EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE, A LIVELY FAITH IN CHRIST, OR REGENERATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WILL APPEAR NOT ONLY UNNECESSARY, BUT ABSURD.

As the knowledge of our depravity is the source from whence evangelical repentance and Christian humility flow, so it is the only necessary preparation for that living faith by which we are both justified and sanctified. He who obstinately closes his eyes upon his own wretchedness shuts himself up in circumstances which will not suffer him to receive any advantage from that glorious Redeemer whom "God hath anointed to preach the gospel to the poor ;" to heal the "broken-hearted ; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind ; to set at liberty them that are bruised ; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke iv. 18, 19. Reason itself declares, that if sinful man is possessed of

sufficient ability to secure his own salvation, he needs no other Saviour, and "Christ is dead in vain." Gal. ii. 21. In short, so far as we are unacquainted with our degenerate estate, so far the important doctrine of regeneration must necessarily appear superfluous and absurd.

Here we may perceive one grand reason, why the ministers of the present day, who are but superficially acquainted with the depravity of the human heart, discourse upon this mysterious subject in a slight and unsatisfactory manner.

The true minister, on the contrary, following the example of his great Master, speaks upon this momentous change with affection and power. Observe the terms in which our Lord himself declares this neglected doctrine :—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5. As though he should say, The natural man, how beautiful an appearance soever he may make, is possessed of an heart so desperately wicked, that unless it be broken by the repentance which John the baptist preached, and regenerated by the faith which I declare, he can never become a citizen of heaven ; for the doors of my kingdom must remain everlastingly barred against those "ravening wolves" who disguise themselves as sheep, Matt. vii. 15, and those painted hypocrites who salute me as their Lord, without embracing my doctrines and observing my commands. "Verily," therefore, "I say unto you," my first disciples and friends, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children," who are strangers to ambitious, envious, and impure thoughts, "ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 3.

Such is the doctrine that is still able to convert every inquiring Nicodemus. At first it may perplex and confound them ; but, at length, submitting to the wisdom of their heavenly Teacher, they will be constrained to cry out, "Impart to us, Lord, this regenerating faith ;" and when once they have obtained their request, they will adopt the prayer of the disciples, Luke xvii. 5, and proceed, like them, from faith to faith, till all things in their regenerate hearts are become new.

But if this doctrine is a savour of life unto some, it is also a savour of death unto others. It gives offence to blinded bigots, while modern infidels strengthen themselves against it, as Pharaoh once strengthened himself against the authority of Jehovah. "Thus saith the Lord," said Moses to that obstinate monarch, "Let my people go, that they may serve me;" Exodus viii. 1; and the haughty infidel replied, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Exodus v. 2. Come up out of mystic Egypt, saith the Son of God to every sinful soul: "Follow me in the regeneration," Matt. xix. 28, and I will teach you to "worship God in spirit and in truth." John iv. 24. And who is the Son of God? replies some petty Pharaoh: I know neither him nor his Father, nor conceive myself in anywise obliged to obey his commands.

Impious as this language may appear, the conduct of every irreligious Christian must be considered as equivalent to it, according to those words of our Lord: "He that despiseth" my servants and my doctrines, "despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Luke x. 16. Whatever mask such a pharisaical professor may wear, he loves the world; therefore "the love of the Father is not in him;" 1 John ii. 15; he hates both Christ and his Father, John xv. 24; his repentance is superficial, his faith is vain, and, sooner or later, his actions or his words will testify that he is an utter enemy to Christ and his members.

HOW THE FAITHFUL PASTOR LEADS SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.

WHAT was spoken by God to Jeremiah may, in some sort, be applied to the true minister: "I have set thee to root out and to plant, to pull down and to build." Jer. i. 10. For before the sacred vine can be planted, the thorns of sin must be rooted up, together with the thistles of counterfeit righteousness; and before the strong tower of salvation can be erected, that spiritual babel must be overthrown by which presumptuous men are still exalting themselves against heaven.

To lead sinners into a state of evangelical repentance, the true minister discovers to their view the corruption of the heart, with all the melancholy effects it produces in the character and conversation of unregenerate men. After he has denounced the anathemas of the law against particular vices, such as swearing, lying, evil-speaking, extortion, drunkenness, &c., he points out the magnitude of two general or primitive sins. The greatest offence, according to the law, he declares to be that by which its first and great command is violated ; consequently, those who love not God beyond all created beings, he charges with living in the habit of damnable sin, since they transgress that most sacred of all laws, which binds us to love the Deity with all our heart. Matt. xxii. 37, 38. Hence he goes on to convict those of violating a command like unto the first, who love not their neighbour as themselves; Matt. xxii. 39 ; and to these two sins, as to their deadly sources, he traces all the crimes which are forbidden in the law and in the prophets. Matt. xxii. 40.

And now he proceeds to lay open before the eyes of professing Christians the two greatest sins which are committed under the gospel dispensation. If the two great commands of God under the new covenant are to this effect, that we believe on his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another ; 1 John iii. 23 ; it is evident that the two greatest sins under the gospel are, the want of that living faith which unites us to Christ, and that ardent charity which binds us to mankind in general, as well as to believers in particular, with the bands of cordial affection. As darkness proceeds from the absence of the sun and moon, so from these two sins of omission flow all the various offences which are prohibited by the evangelical law. And if those who are immersed in these primitive sins are withheld from the actual commission of enormous offences, they are not on this account to be esteemed radically holy, since they are possessed of that very nature from which every crime is produced. Sooner or later, temptation and opportunity may cause some baneful shoots to spring forth in their outward conduct, in testimony that a root of bitterness lies deep within, and that

the least impious of men carry about them a degenerate nature, a body of sin and death.

To give more weight to these observations, he sets forth the greatness of the supreme Being, enlarges on his justice, and displays the severity of his laws. He tramples under foot the the pharisaical holiness of sinners, that he may bring into estimation the real virtues of the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. To awaken those who are sleeping in a state of carnal security, he denounces the most alarming maledictions, calling forth against them the thunders of mount Sinai, till they are constrained to turn their faces Zionward; till they seek for safety in the Mediator of the new covenant, and hasten to "the sprinkling of that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." Hebrews xii. 24.

By this method he conducts his wandering flock to the very point where ancient Israel stood, when God had prepared them to receive the law by his servant Moses. Now, after the people had heard the "thunderings," and "the noise of the trumpet;" after they had seen "the lightnings, and the mountain smoking;" Exodus xx. 18; when, unable any longer to gaze on the dreadful scene, "they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak unto us," without a mediator, "lest we die;" Exodus xx. 19; then it was that Moses began to console them in the following words: "Fear not; for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." Exodus xx. 20. So, in the present day, they only who are brought to this poverty of spirit are properly disposed to receive the riches of divine mercy. As soon, therefore, as the evangelical minister has sufficiently alarmed a sinner with the terrors discovered upon mount Sinai, he anxiously prepares him for the consolations of the Gospel by a sight of the suffering scene upon Calvary.

Many pious divines have supposed that, by preaching the cross of Christ alone, mankind might be brought to true repentance. What the fathers of the synod of Berne have said upon this point deserves the attention of those

who desire successfully to use that spiritual weapon, which is "sharper than any two-edged sword." Hebrews iv. 12.

"The knowledge of sin," say they, "must of necessity be drawn from Jesus Christ. The apostle writes thus, 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Rom. v. 8. It follows, that sin must have made us abominable and extremely hateful, since the Son of God could no other way deliver us from the burden of it, than by dying in our stead. Hence we may conceive what a depth of misery and corruption there is in the heart, since it was not able to be purified but by the sacrifice of so precious a victim, and by the sprinkling of the blood of God ;" that is, of a man miraculously formed, in whom dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. ii. 9. "The apostles have clearly manifested the sinfulness of our nature by the death of Christ ; whereas the Jews, after all their painful researches, were not convinced of sin by the law of Moses. After a solid knowledge of sin has been drawn from the passion of our Lord, there will naturally flow from this knowledge a true repentance, that is, a lively sorrow for sin mingled with the hope of future pardon. To this necessary work the Holy Spirit also powerfully contributes, bringing more and more to the light, by its mysterious operations, the hidden evils and unsuspected corruptions of the heart ; daily purifying it from the filthiness of sin, as silver is purified by the fire." Acts of Synod, chap. viii., ix., xiv.

HOW THE PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST, HIS FORERUNNER, AND HIS APOSTLES, PREPARED SINNERS FOR REPENTANCE.

EVER faithful to the word of God, the minister of the gospel endeavours to humble the impenitent, by appealing to the sacred writers, and particularly to the declarations of Jesus Christ.

The corruption of the heart is the most ancient and dreadful malady of the human race. Man had no sooner made trial of sin, but he was driven by it from an earthly paradise ; Gen. iii. 24 ; and so terrible were its first effects,

that the second man was seen to assassinate the third. Gen. iv. 8. This moral contagion increased through every age to so astonishing a degree, that before the deluge "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. After the flood, God still declared the imagination of man's heart to be "evil from his youth." Gen. viii. 21. "The heart of man," saith he again, long after that time, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

Our Lord himself, who perfectly "knew what was in man," John ii. 25, being the Physician who alone is able to heal us, and the Judge who will render to every one according to his works; our Lord has described mankind alienated from the chief good, filled with aversion to his people, and enemies to God himself. "I send you forth," saith he to his disciples, "as lambs among wolves." Luke x. 3. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because I have chosen you out of the world," that ye should walk in my steps, "therefore the world hateth you. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." John xv. 18—20. "All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because," notwithstanding their deism and polytheism, "they know not him that sent me;" for "he that hateth me, hateth my Father also." John xv. 21, 23. "These things have I told you, that" when they shall chase you from their churches, as demons would chase an angel of light, "ye may remember that I told you of them." John xvi. 4.

The Jews were doubtless, in one sense, the most enlightened of all people; seeing they offered to the true God a public worship unmixed with idolatry; were in possession of the law of Moses, the psalms of David, together with the writings of the other prophets, in which the duties required of man, both with respect to God and his neighbour, are traced out in the most accurate manner. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ represents this enlightened

people as universally corrupted, in spite of all these advantages. "Did not Moses," saith he to them, "give you the law? and yet none of you keepeth the law." John vii. 19.

What appears most extraordinary in the sermons of our Lord is the zeal with which he bore his testimony against the virtues of those Jews who were reputed men of uncommon devotion. Although they piqued themselves upon being eminently righteous, he declared to his disciples, that unless their "righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, they should in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v. 20. And observe the manner in which he generally addressed those religious impostors: "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess,"—full of covetous desires and disorderly passions. "Thou blind pharisee, cleanse first that which is within, that the outside may be clean also." Matthew xxiii. 25, 26.

Nothing is more common than that blindness which suffers a man to esteem himself better than he really is; and this blindness is, in every period and in every place, the distinguishing characteristic of a pharisee. This species of hypocrisy, with which St. Paul himself was once elated, agrees perfectly well with the ordinary sincerity of nominal Christians, who blindly regard amusements the most trifling and expensive as allowable and innocent pleasures, who look upon theatres as schools of virtue, intrigue and deceit as prudence and fashion, pomp and profusion as generosity and decorum, avarice as frugality, pride as delicacy of sentiment, adultery as gallantry, and murder as an affair of honour.

To all such modern Christians may we not with propriety repeat what our Lord once openly addressed to their predecessors?—without doubt we are authorized to cry out against them with an holy zeal, "Woe unto you, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Matt. xxiii. 27.

“Ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity ;” of hypocrisy, because your virtues have more of appearance than solidity ; and of injustice, because you render not that which is due to God, to Cæsar, or to your fellow-creatures, whether it be adoration, fear, honour, support, or good will. Matt. xxiii. 28.

But if the depravity of the Jews in general, and of the pharisees in particular, appears abundantly evident, must we suppose there were no happy exceptions among them ? It is true, the royal prophet declares, “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Psalm xiv. 2, 3. But were not the disciples of our Lord to be considered in a different point of view ? No : even after the extraordinary assistance afforded them by the Son of God, the apostles themselves did but confirm the sad assertion of the psalmist. Our Lord, upon whom no appearances could impose, once testified to James and John, that, notwithstanding their zeal for his person, they were unacquainted with his real character ; and that, instead of being influenced by his spirit, they were actuated by that of the destroyer. Luke ix. 55. “Ye then, being evil,” said he to all his disciples. Matt. vii. 11. “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?” John vi. 70. “One of you shall betray me.” Peter, who is the most resolute to confess me, “shall deny me thrice.” And “all ye shall be offended because of me.” Matt. xxvi. 21, 34, 31. Lastly : our Lord constantly represented the unregenerate as persons diseased and condemned. “They that are whole,” said he, “have no need of the physician, but they that are sick : I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Mark ii. 17. “Ye are of this world : therefore I said unto you, that ye shall die in your sins ; for if ye believe not that I am he,” and refuse to observe the spiritual regimen I prescribe, “ye shall die in your sins.” John viii. 23, 24. “Except ye repent, ye shall perish.” Luke xiii. 5.

It is notorious, that John the baptist prepared the way of his adorable Master by preaching the same doctrine. "O generation of vipers," said he to the pharisees and sadducees,—to the profane and professing part of the nation,—“who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.” Matt. iii. 7, 8.

It is equally well known, that the disciples were instructed by Christ himself to tread in the steps of his forerunner. "It behoved," said he, "Christ to suffer, and that repentance should be preached in his name among all nations." Luke xxiv. 46, 47. Hence an apostle was heard to cry out, "God now commandeth all men every where to repent." Acts xvii. 30. And at other times the same divine teacher was inspired to write as follows:—"We, who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the gentiles, were by nature the children of wrath, even as others;" Gal. ii. 15; Eph. ii. 3; "for we were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Titus iii. 3.

The same doctrine was constantly held forth by the other apostles, as well as by St. Paul. In "time past," saith St. Peter, "we have wrought the will of the gentiles, walking in lasciviousness, lusts, revellings," &c. 1 Peter iv. 3. "The whole world lieth in wickedness," saith the beloved John; 1 John v. 19; and St. James solemnly testifies, that every "friend of the world is the enemy of God." James iv. 4.

This humiliating doctrine, which the world universally abhors, is a light too valuable to be hidden under a bushel, and till it is raised, as it were, upon a candlestick of gold, we can never hope to see the visible church enlightened and reformed.

OBSERVATIONS UPON THE REPENTANCE OF WORLDLY MEN.

IF it be inquired, Do not all ministers preach repentance? we answer, that, ordinarily, true ministers alone preach true repentance. The preachers of the day, as they

are conformable to the world in other things, so they are perfectly contented with practising the repentance of worldly men. Now, as he who receives only base coin cannot possibly circulate good money, so he who satisfies his heart with a short-lived sorrow for sin cannot possibly give free course to that evangelical repentance which the gospel requires. And it is observable, that the hearers of such ill-instructed scribes generally fix those bounds to their repentance which are satisfactory to their impenitent pastors.

The repentance we here condemn may be known by the following marks :—

1. It is superficial, and founded only upon the most vague ideas of our corruption : hence it cannot, like that of David and Jeremiah, trace sin to its source, and bewail the depravity of the whole heart. Psalm li. 5 ; Jeremiah xvii. 9.

2. It is pharisaical, regarding only outward sins. The righteousness of the pharisees rested upon the most trifling observances, while they neglected those weighty commands of the law which respect the love of God and our neighbour. Matt. xxiii. 23. They afflicted themselves when they had not scrupulously paid the tenths of their herbs ; but they smote not upon their breasts when they had rejected the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. In the same dangerous circumstances are those penitents of the present day who are less sorrowful on account of having offended God and rejected Christ, than that they are become objects of ridicule, contempt, or punishment, by the commission of some impious or dishonourable action. We frequently hear these false penitents bewailing the condition to which they have reduced themselves, and giving vent to the most passionate expressions of sorrow. But when are they seen to afflict themselves, because they have not been wholly devoted to God ? Or when do they shed a single tear at the recollection, that they have not cherished their neighbour as themselves ? Are they ever heard to lament the want of that “ faith ’ in Christ “ which worketh by love ? ” Gal. v. 6. Are they ever engaged in seeking after that communion

of saints by which believers become of one heart and one soul? Alas! so far are they from this, that they continue equally tranquil under the maledictions of the gospel as under those of the law. They hear without terror those dreadful words of the apostle, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha;" 1 Cor. xvi. 22; and though they neither love nor know him, yet they vainly look upon themselves as godly mourners and unfeigned penitents.

3. This repentance is unfruitful, inasmuch as those who repent after this manner are utter strangers to compunction of heart. None of these are constrained to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts ii. 37. They come not to the Redeemer among such as "are weary and heavy laden." Matt. xi. 28. They have no experience of that godly sorrow by which the true penitent dies to sin; and so far are they from being born again of the Spirit, that they neither expect nor desire any such regeneration. In short, this repentance is rarely as sincere as that of Judas, who confessed his sin, justified the innocent, subdued his ruling passion, and returned the money he had so dearly obtained.

Evangelical repentance is an incomprehensible work to the generality of ministers. Wherever it appears, they are prepared to censure it; and are earnest in exhorting men to fly from it, rather than request it as a gift from God. Thus, when they behold any one truly mourning under a sense of sin; smiting upon his breast with the publican; stripping off, with St. Paul, the covering of his own righteousness; and inquiring, with the convicted jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30; they suppose these to be certain signs of a deep melancholy; they imagine the conversation of some enthusiast has driven the man to despair; and will not scruple to affirm, that he has lost the proper use of his reason. So true it is that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. ii. 14, nor is able even to form any just idea of that repentance which is the first duty imposed upon us by the gospel, and the first step toward that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

The moralists of the present time acknowledge that all men are sinners ; but they neglect to draw the just consequences from so sad a truth. To be found a sinner before an infinitely holy and just God is to forfeit at once both our felicity and existence. To appear as an impenitent offender in the eyes of our all-seeing Judge, is to lie in the condition of a broken vessel which the potter throws aside as refuse ; it is to stand in the circumstances of a criminal convicted of violating the most sacred laws of his prince. The two most important laws of God are those which require piety toward himself, and charity toward our neighbour. Now, if we have violated both the one and the other of these laws, and that times without number, it becomes us not only to confess our transgression, but to consider our danger. When a traitor is convicted of treason, or an assassin of murder, he immediately expects to hear his sentence pronounced ; and thus, when a sinner confesses himself to be such, he makes a tacit acknowledgment, that sentence of death might justly be pronounced upon him.

Some persons are naturally so short-sighted, that they can only discover the most striking objects about them. Many in the moral world are in similar circumstances, to whom nothing appears as sin, except impieties of the grossest kind. If we judge of God's commands according to the prejudices of these men, idolatry is nothing less than the act of prostrating ourselves before an idol ; and murder is merely the act by which a man destroys the life of his fellow-creature. But if these deluded persons could contemplate sin in a scriptural light ; if they could avail themselves of the law of God, as of an observatory erected for sacred meditation, their moral view would be sufficiently strengthened to discover the following truths :—

1. If we have not at all times placed a greater confidence in the Creator than in any of his creatures ; if we have either feared or loved any one more than our celestial Parent ; we have then really set up another God, in opposition to the Lord of heaven and earth.

2. If, neglecting to worship the Almighty in spirit and in truth, we have suffered ourselves to be seduced from

his presence by any splendid vanity of the age, we have sinned in the same degree as though we had fallen down before a molten image.

3. If, in our conversation, our reading, or our prayers, we have ever irreverently pronounced the name of God, we have then taken that sacred name in vain ; and God himself declares, that he will not hold such a one guiltless.

4. If we have refused to labour diligently, through the week, in the work of our particular calling ; or if we have ever made the sabbath a day of spiritual indolence and frivolous amusement ; then we have neglected and broken that law which we are peculiarly commanded to “remember and keep.”

5. If we have been wanting at any time in obedience, respect, or love, to our parents, our pastors, our magistrates, or to any of our superiors ; or if we have neglected any of those duties which our relations in society, or our particular vocation have imposed upon us ; we have merited that God should cut us off from the land of the living.

6. If we have weakened our constitution by excess of any kind ; if we have struck our neighbour in a moment of passion ; if we have ever spoken an injurious word ; if we have ever cast a look directed by malice ; if we have ever formed in our hearts a single evil wish against any person whatever ; or if we have ever ceased to love our brother ; we have then, in the sight of God, committed a species of murder. 1 John iii. 15.

7. If we have ever looked upon a woman with any other feelings than those of chastity ; Matt. v. 28 ; or if we have at any time cast a wishful glance upon the honours and pleasures of the world ; we have sufficiently proved the impurity of our nature, and must be considered as living in “enmity with God.” James iv. 4.

8. If we have received the profit annexed to any post or employment, without carefully discharging the duties incumbent upon us in such situation ; or if we have taken advantage either of the ignorance or the necessity of others, in order to enrich ourselves at their expense ; we

may justly rank ourselves with those who openly violate the eighth command.

9. If we have ever offended against truth in our ordinary conversation ; if we have neglected to fulfil our promises, or have ever broken our vows, whether made to God or man ; we have reason, in this respect, to plead guilty before the tribunal of immutable truth.

10. If we have ever been dissatisfied with our lot in life ; if we have ever indulged restless desires, or have given way to envious and irregular wishes ; we have then assuredly admitted into our hearts that covetousness which is the root of every evil.

When St. Paul considered the law in this point of view, he cried out, "It is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin." Rom. vii. 14. And when Isaiah, passing from the letter to the spirit, discovered the vast extent of the decalogue, he exclaimed, "Woe is me ! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Isaiah vi. 5. If our self-applauding moralists would be persuaded to weigh their piety in the same balance, they would find it as defective, at least, as that of Isaiah and St. Paul.

Here, perhaps, some objecting pharisee may say, "If I have sinned in some degree, yet I have not committed such crimes as many others are guilty of ; and I trust that God will not be severe in attending to trifling sins." But, 1. These pretended trifling sins are ordinarily of so great a number, that the multitude of them becomes equivalent to the enormity of those crimes which are rarely committed : so mountains and seas are but collections of grains of sand and drops of water.

2. Every voluntary transgression argues a real contempt of the legislator's authority ; and in such contempt there is found the seed of every sin that can possibly be committed in opposition to his express command. All the commands of God, whether they be great or small, have no other sanction than that which consists in his divine authority ; and this authority is trampled under foot by every petty delinquent, as well as by every daring transgressor.

3. Those which we usually esteem trivial sins are the more dangerous on account of their being less attended to. They are committed without fear, without remorse, and generally without intermission. As there are more ships of war destroyed by worms than by the shot of the enemy, so the multitude of those who destroy themselves through ordinary sins exceeds the number of those who perish by enormous offences.

4. We have a thousand proofs that small sins will lead a man, by insensible degrees, to the commission of greater. Nothing is more common among us than the custom of swearing, and giving way to wrath without reason; and these are usually regarded as offences of an inconsiderable nature. But there is every reason to believe that they who have contracted these vicious habits would be equally disposed to perjury and murder, were they assailed by any forcible temptation, and unrestrained with the dread of forfeiting their honour or their life. If we judge of a commodity by observing a small sample, so by little sins, as well as by trivial acts of virtue, we may form a judgment of the heart. Hence the widow's two mites appeared a considerable oblation in the eyes of Christ, who judged by them how rich an offering the same woman would have made, had she been possessed of the means. For the same reason, those frequent exclamations, in which the name of God is taken in vain, those poignant raileries, and those frivolous lies, which are produced in common conversation, discover the true disposition of those persons who, without insult or temptation, can violate the sacred laws of piety and love. The same seeds produce fruit more or less perfect, according to the sterility or luxuriance of the soil in which they are sown. Thus the very same principle of malevolence which leads a child to torment an insect acts more forcibly upon the heart of a slanderous woman, whose highest joy consists in mangling the reputation of a neighbour; nor is the most detestable tyrant actuated by a different principle who finds a barbarous pleasure in persecuting the righteous, and shedding the blood of the innocent.

If prejudice will not allow these observations to be just,

reason declares the contrary. The very same action that, in certain cases, would be esteemed a failing, becomes, in some circumstances, an offence, and in others, an enormous crime. For instance: if I despise an inferior, I commit a fault; if the offended party is my equal, my fault rises in magnitude; if he is my superior, it is greater still; if he is a respectable magistrate, a beneficent prince, if that prince is my sovereign lord, whose lenity I have experienced after repeated acts of rebellion, who has heaped upon me many kindnesses, who means to bestow upon me still greater favours, and if, after all, I have been led to deny and oppose him, my crime is undoubtedly aggravated by all these circumstances to an extraordinary degree. But, if this offended benefactor is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Creator of man, the Monarch of angels, the Ancient of days, before whom the majesty of all the monarchs upon earth disappears, as the lustre of a thousand stars is eclipsed by the presence of the sun; if this glorious being has given his beloved Son to suffer infamy and death, in order to procure for me eternal life and celestial glory; my crime must then be aggravated in proportion to my own meanness, the greatness of benefits received, and the dignity of my exalted Benefactor. But our imagination is bewildered when we attempt to scan the enormity which these accumulated circumstances add to those acts of rebellion denominated sins.

They who are not working out their "salvation with fear and trembling," Phil. ii. 12, must necessarily live in the practice of some constitutional sin; and this self-indulgence, however secret it may be, will not suffer them to perceive the demerit of their daily transgressions. An old debauchee, whose chief delight has been in seducing women, or an infamous murderer, who has shed human blood like water, may as easily conceive the horror that adultery and murder excite in virtuous souls.

Before we can form a rational judgment of sin and the punishment it deserves, it becomes us to entertain just ideas of moral order; to mark the obligation laid upon the supreme Legislator to maintain that order by wholesome laws; and to discover, in some degree, the

sanctity, the excellence, and the extent of those absolute commands. It is necessary to understand the dependence of the creature upon the Creator, since the image formed by the presence of an object before a mirror is not more dependent upon that object than all orders of created beings depend upon the Creator: if he withdraws his protecting hand, they are no more; if he stretches out the arm of his vengeance, they are plunged, at once, into an abyss of misery. We must reflect upon all the various obligations under which we lie to the Almighty, as Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Comforter. We must consider those examples of his vengeful justice which he has placed before our eyes on purpose to awaken our fears, together with the unmerited favours by which he has constantly sought to engage our grateful affection. It becomes us, likewise, to observe the vanity of all those appearances by which we are allured into sin; and lastly, it is necessary to remember, that "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing." Eccles. xii. 14. While we pay not a proper attention to every one of these circumstances, we must necessarily form an imperfect judgment, concerning the nature of sin, the severity with which God has determined to punish it, and the greatness of that expiatory sacrifice, by virtue of which his justice and his mercy unite in pardoning the penitent.

When the law of God is wilfully transgressed, it is ridiculous in any man to attempt the justification of himself by pleading, that he has committed no enormous crimes, or that, if ever he has been guilty of any such offences, his good actions have always been sufficient to counterbalance their demerit. Frivolous excuses! Is not one treasonable act sufficient to mark the traitor? Is not that soldier punished as a deserter who flies his colours but a single time? And does not a woman forfeit her honour by one moment of weakness?

Though we grant, there are some sins of a peculiarly atrocious kind, yet as murder will always appear, before an earthly tribunal, according to its horrible nature, so sin will ever be considered as such before an infinitely holy God. If a man, accused of having wilfully poisoned

a fellow-creature, should address his judge in terms like these:—"The charge brought against me is just: but let it be considered, that the person I have destroyed was only an infant; that he was the child of a common beggar; and that this is the only murder I have committed through the whole of my life. On the other hand, I have been a constant benefactor to the poor: and surely a thousand acts of charity will abundantly outweigh one little dose of arsenic." "No," the judge would answer; "when you prolonged the life of the indigent by your alms, you merely performed a duty which is universally required of every worthy citizen; and the law allows you nothing on this account. But if you have given the smallest dose of poison to any human creature with an intent to destroy his life, the law pronounces you a murderer, and will punish you as such."

After our first parents had offended by eating the forbidden fruit, they had but vainly excused themselves in saying, "We have gathered only that which appeared to be of little worth; we have tasted it but once; moreover, our labour in the garden is of much greater value than the fruit we have taken. Lord, condemn us not to death for so inconsiderable an offence." Such, however, are the frivolous excuses with which every blinded moralist contents his seared conscience, and with which he hopes to satisfy his omniscient Judge. When St. Paul was one of this class, he practised upon himself the same delusions. Capable only of natural sentiments, the hidden truths of a spiritual law were not only incomprehensible, but vain and foolish things, in his estimation. This we learn from the following passage in his epistle to the Romans:—"I was alive without the law once," paying little attention to the spirituality of its precepts, or the severity of its threatenings, and indulging no suspicion either of my corruption, or my condemnation. "But when the commandment came" in its spiritual energy, "sin revived," assuming an appearance suited to its infernal nature, "and," receiving a sentence of death in myself, "I died. I had not" then "known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust," which is the source of every evil, and the

first cause of our condemnation, "except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Rom. vii. 9, 7.

Every sincere Christian, in imitation of this apostle, may with propriety say, "There are various sins which I had never seen as such, but by the light of the gospel. For example: I had lived in security, with respect to abusing the faculty of speech, and had never known the Almighty's intention of judging me upon that article, if Christ himself had not made the following solemn declaration, 'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.'" Matt. xii. 36, 37. If those who trust in their own righteousness would seriously examine themselves by the twofold law of Moses and of Christ, they would form a new judgment of their spiritual circumstances, and pass, with St. Paul, from the state of the pharisee into that of the publican.

Further: sins of omission, as well as those of commission, are sufficient to draw upon us the maledictions of the law, which equally commands us to do good and to abstain from evil. Offences of this nature are seldom regarded as sins by the generality of mankind; and hence they are wholly unalarmed at the recollection of them. To lack diligence in our duties, moderation in our joys, attention in our prayers, and zeal in our devotions; to live without gratitude toward our divine Benefactor, without resignation under losses, without patience in affliction, without confidence in God during times of danger, and without contentment in the state to which he has called us; to want humility toward our superiors, courtesy toward our equals, affability toward our inferiors, meekness toward those who displease us, faithfulness to our word, strict truth in our conversation, or charity in the judgment we form of others; all these are things which never disturb the repose of a worldly man; nor does he esteem them as real offences in the sight of God. He considers not, that an inattentive nurse may as effectually destroy a child, by withholding from it proper nourishment, as by obliging it to sip a poisonous draught; that a soldier would be condemned to death, if

the enemy should surprise a town while he was sleeping on his post, equally as though he had been busy in opening the gates for their admission ; and that Christ represents the want of an holy fervour as the grand reason why lukewarm Christians excite in him the utmost detestation and abhorrence. Rev. iii. 16. An entire chapter in the gospel is employed to teach us, that sins of omission will constitute the principal cause of a sinner's condemnation at the last day. The slothful servant is cast into outer darkness, not for having robbed another of his talent, but for the non-improvement of his own ; the foolish virgins are excluded from the marriage feast, not for having betrayed the bridegroom, but because they were unprepared to receive him ; and every Christian is acquainted with that terrible sentence which shall one day be pronounced upon the wicked : " Depart from me, ye cursed ; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat," &c. Matt. xxv. To have that " religion which is pure and undefiled before God," it is not only necessary that we " keep ourselves unspotted from the world," but we must also " visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," James i. 27, relieving the unfortunate to the utmost of our ability, and exerting our whole power in spreading truth and happiness among all around us.

Thus hunted, at length, from many a dangerous shelter, unhumbled sinners will still presume to adopt the following plea :—" We pray, we fast, we give alms, we receive the holy sacrament, and what more do you require ?" Such was the foundation of the ancient pharisees' hope ; but Christ and his apostles overthrew their vain confidence by the same arguments which evangelical ministers are still obliged to turn against multitudes of religious professors who indulge an exalted opinion of their own contemptible merits.

" The gospel requires," say these faithful pastors, " that to the external marks of religion, you should be careful to add humility and charity ; and if these two capital graces are wanting, your religion is but a body without a soul. 2 Tim. iii. 5. You have received the holy sacraments of our church ; but what salutary effects have they

produced in your life and conversation? The circumcision which saved the Jews was not the circumcision of the flesh, but that of the heart; Rom. ii. 29; and the baptism which saves Christians is not that by which the body is sprinkled with water, but that which purifies the soul. 1 Peter iii. 21. So the passover which was acceptable to God on the part of the Jews consisted, not simply in eating the paschal lamb, but in penetrating their souls with gratitude, on recollecting the many wonderful deliverances which the Almighty had wrought for his people. And the communion which is acceptable on the part of Christians consists, not merely in receiving the consecrated elements, as various classes of sinners are accustomed to do, but in uniting themselves to the Lord by a living faith, and to all his members by an ardent charity. You pray: and did not the pharisees so? Yea, they were remarkable for their long and zealous prayers; but, alas! while they acknowledged God 'with their lips, their hearts were far from him.' Isaiah xxix. 13. You give alms: but if you mean with these to purchase heaven, you do but deceive your own souls, while your pretended charity degenerates into insolence; or if you merely seek to procure the reputation of being charitably disposed, you have your reward. You fast: but if you do this chiefly through custom, or through respect to the orders of your prince, your fast can no more be counted religious, than the regimen prescribed you by a physician; and if these fasts have not produced in you a sincere repentance and a true conversion, however you may regard them as acts of devotion, they are in reality no other than acts of hypocrisy. Moreover, the pharisees fasted twice in the week, while you, it may be, are among the number of those who imagine they have made a valuable sacrifice to God by abstaining from a single repast in a year."

As pharisaical moralists "have sought out" so "many inventions," Eccles. vii. 29, to evade the necessity of an unfeigned repentance; and as philosophizing Christians rise up with one consent against this doctrine of the gospel; we shall conclude this subject by disclosing the sources of their common error.

1. There are phantoms of virtue, or virtues purely natural, which pass in the world for divine. But who ever imagined the dove to be really virtuous, because she is not seen, like the eagle, to make a stoop at birds of a weaker frame than herself? Or who supposes wasps to be generous insects, because they are observed mutually to defend themselves when their nest is attacked? Is not the conjugal and maternal tenderness of the human species apparent, in an eminent degree, among various tribes of the feathered kind? And do we not see among bees and ants that ardent patriotism which was so highly extolled among the Romans? Does not the spider exhibit as manifest proofs of ingenuity and vigilance as the most industrious artist? And do not carnivorous animals discover all that fearless intrepidity which is so universally boasted by vain-glorious heroes? Let us not mistake in a matter of so much importance. As nothing but charity can give to our alms the value of good works, so nothing less than the fear of God, and a sincere intention of pleasing him, can give to our most valuable propensities the stamp of solid virtues. If we could completely expose the worthless alloy which worldly men are accustomed to pass off as sterling virtue, many of those who now esteem themselves rich in good works would be constrained to "abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes." Job xlii. 6.

2. Many persons indulge too favourable ideas of the human heart, through their ignorance of that unsullied purity which God requires of his intelligent creatures. They judge of themselves and others as a peasant judges of a theme replete with solecisms, who, far from expressing the discernment of a critic, admires the vast erudition of the young composer. Thus some external acts of devotion are applauded by undiscerning Christians as commendable works, which, in the sight of God, and before holy spirits, appear altogether polluted and worthy of punishment.

3. If we are sometimes deceived by our own ignorance, we more frequently impose upon others by our innate hypocrisy. Unregenerate men, after having thrown a

cloak over their distinguishing vices, are anxious to make a parade of virtues which they do not possess. The proud man is sometimes observed putting on the garb of humility, and, with the most lowly obeisance, professing himself the very humble servant of an approaching stranger. Immodesty is frequently masked with an affected air of chastity and bashfulness; hatred, envy, and duplicity veil themselves under the appearances of good-nature, friendship, and simplicity; and this universal hypocrisy contributes to render its practitioners less outwardly offensive than they would otherwise be, as an unhandsome woman appears less defective to a distant beholder, after having nicely varnished over the blemishes of her face.

4. It frequently happens that one vice puts a period to the progress of another. Thus vanity, at times, obliges us to act contrary to the maxims of avarice, avarice contrary to those of indolence, and indolence contrary to those of ambition. A refined pride is generally sufficient to overcome contemptible vices, and may influence its possessor to the performance of many exterior virtues. Hence the impious and sordid pharisee went regularly to the temple; he prayed, he fasted, he gave alms, and, by all these appearances of piety and benevolence, acquired the commendation of the world. Society makes a kind of gain by these acts of dissimulation, which are as the homage paid to virtue by vice, and by impiety to devotion. But, notwithstanding every plausible appearance that can possibly be put on, when the minister of the gospel declares the fall of man, together with the absolute need of regeneration, he is supported, at once, by revelation, reason, and experience.

5. If the moral disorder with which human nature is infected appears not always at its utmost height, it is because regeneration, having commenced in many persons of every rank, the wicked are overawed by the influence of their example. Add to this, that God restrains them, as with a bridle, by his providence, and by those motions of conscience which they vainly endeavour to stifle. It is notorious, that the fear of public contempt and punishment is sometimes sufficient to arrest the most abandoned in their vicious career, since

they cannot discover what they really are, without arming against themselves the secular power. Thus the terror which prisons and gibbets inspire constrains ravening wolves to appear at particular seasons in the garb of inoffensive sheep. But is it possible that innocence so constrained should be accounted of any value, even among heathens themselves? It is impossible, since we find one of their own poets declaring,—

Oderunt peccare mali, formidine pœnæ.

“The wicked abstain from mischief through fear of punishment.” And all the recompence he conceives due to such guiltless persons consists in not becoming the food of ravens upon a gibbet:—

Non pascas in cruce corvos.

6. If servile fear is sometimes the cause of our innocence, necessity is more commonly the cause of our apparent virtues. A youth of any modesty is generally cautious among his superiors, who afford him neither money to indulge, nor liberty to discover, his inclinations. Now, if this forced discretion should, at length, become habitual to him, he may, in such circumstances, esteem himself a virtuous man, because he has not, like the son of a dissolute courtier, plunged himself into every kind of impiety; whereas had he enjoyed but equal liberty with the licentious rake, he might have surpassed him in every sinful excess. On the other hand, when an infamous voluptuary, enfeebled either by age or by his frequent debaucheries, finds it absolutely needful to live in more sober and orderly style, immediately he takes himself for another Cato, not considering, that necessity alone is the source of his temperance. The least excess disorders his health, and the weakness of his stomach obliges him to abstain from those luxurious feasts which he can still converse of with so much satisfaction. If such a one is virtuous, because no longer able to rush into his former excesses, then we may prove the most incorrigible robber to be an honest man while the irons are on his hands, or when, scared by the officers of justice, he flies to some secret

retreat. Has that woman any reason to boast of her virtuous conduct who was never solicited by those men who were most likely to have triumphed over her modesty? And yet many such, filled with self-approbation, will frequently applaud their own innocence, placing that to the account of virtue which was merely owing to providential circumstances, or, perhaps, to the want of personal attraction. Such plausible appearances no more merit the commendation due to solid virtue, than the sickly wolf, that peaceably passes by a flock of sheep, can be said to deserve the caresses which a shepherd bestows upon his faithful dog.

7. Effectually to impose upon others by a beautiful outside, we practise a deeper deceit upon our own hearts; and very frequently we succeed as well in hiding from ourselves our own evil dispositions, as in concealing from others our unworthy actions. Could we discover all that secretly passes in the world, we should not want demonstrative proofs of the depravity of the human heart. But why need we go abroad in search of a truth which is easily evidenced at home? Had we ourselves but dared to have executed openly what we have acted in imagination, when our irascible or concupiscible passions have been roused, where should we have hidden our guilty heads, or how should we have escaped the sword of justice? Convinced too late of our degenerate nature, we should haply have smitten upon our breasts with the repentant publican, adopting long ago his humiliating confession in the anguish of our souls. Every thinking person must allow, that had evil intentions fallen under the cognizance of human laws, and had the secular power possessed equal ability to punish them as it punishes those actions of which they are the very root and soul, the whole earth must, in such case, have become as vast a scaffold as it is now a place of graves. Can it be necessary to multiply observations upon this head, when the Almighty, whose mercy and justice are infinite, sufficiently declares the universal depravity of mankind by the variety of scourges with which he is constrained to punish both individuals and commonwealths?

8. If the children of this world are unable to form any just conception of the human heart and its evil propensities, it is because they are in the number of those natural men of whom the apostle Paul makes mention. 1 Cor. ii. 14. And such, having a natural antipathy to the gospel, while they are ever ready to cast reproach upon the faithful, are equally prepared to favour those of a like disposition with themselves. Thus Herod, Caiaphas, and Pilate mutually overlooked the faults of each other, while they united in accusing and persecuting Christ.

It is usual with many who are destitute of true religion to esteem some among their sinful companions as moral and well-disposed men ; but were they themselves to be converted, their error in this respect would soon become apparent. Upon daring to oppose any torrent of impiety with the zeal of their heavenly Master, instead of finding among their associates any natural disposition to real virtue, they would meet with indisputable proofs, in spite of a thousand amiable qualities, that all unregenerate men resemble one another in their "enmity against God." Rom. viii. 7. Yes, whether they inhabit the banks of the Thames or the Seine, the lake of Gennesaret or that of Geneva ; they are in the sight of God as filthy swine trampling under foot the pearls of the gospel, Matt. vii. 6; or like "ravening wolves," Matt. vii. 15, outrageously tearing in pieces the Lamb of God.

It might perhaps have been objected, that this portrait is overcharged, had not Christ himself, who is immutable truth and unsearchable love, pencilled the gloomiest traits observable in it. Following such a guide, though we may give much offence, yet we can never err.

THE SECOND IMPORTANT DOCTRINE INSISTED UPON BY THE
TRUE MINISTER IS A LIVING FAITH.

To show the necessity of repentance without publishing the remission of sins through faith in Jesus Christ would be to open a wound without binding it up. It would be leading sinners to the brink of a tremendous gulf, and cutting off all possibility of their retreat. But nothing can be more contrary to the intention of the faithful

minister, than to sport with the miseries of man, or ultimately to aggravate his distress.

When, he has discovered to his hearers that natural propensity to evil which manifests its existence in every heart by a variety of external transgressions ; when he has convinced them by the word of God, and by an appeal to every man's conscience, 2 Cor. iv. 2, that they are unable to deliver themselves either from that fatal propensity or its dreadful consequences ; after he has thus demonstrated the need in which they stand of a Redeemer, who hath "all power in heaven and in earth," Matt. xxviii. 18 ; if they "harden not their hearts," Psalm xcv. 8 ; if they stand like the first sinner, naked and trembling before God, Gen. iii. 10 ; having received "the sentence of death in" themselves, 2 Cor. i. 9 ; in a word, when they cry out like the publicans and soldiers alarmed by the preaching of John, "What shall we do ?" Luke iii. 12 ; they are then properly disposed to receive "the glorious gospel of Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 4, and will be enabled to experience its powerful effects. From this time the evangelical pastor affectionately preaches remission of sins through faith in the name of a merciful Redeemer.

This is the very same method which Christ and his forerunner pursued. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," was the cry of John the baptist. John i. 29. And, "Blessed," said our Lord, "are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v. 3. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii. 36. "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but it shall be in him a well of water," a source of sacred consolation, "springing up into everlasting life." John iv. 14. Again : when it was inquired by the multitude, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God ? Jesus said

unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." John vi. 28, 29, 40. Thus it was that our adorable Master proclaimed salvation through faith in himself; and indeed it was for this end alone that he appeared upon earth, as we learn from the last address he made to his disciples: "It behoved," said he, "Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, that remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," the abode of his murderers. Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

Observe the great commission given to those messengers of peace: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark xvi. 15, 16. To the same purpose was the commission with which the apostle Paul was afterwards honoured. "I have appeared unto thee," said the persecuted Jesus, "for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness to the gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts xxvi. 16—18.

The apostles unanimously preached in obedience to the orders, and in conformity to the example, of their benevolent Lord. And all true ministers, instructed by the same divine Teacher, continue to proclaim the glad tidings of the gospel through faith in Jesus Christ; laying as much stress in all their sermons upon this efficacious grace, as the apostle of the gentiles was accustomed to do in all his epistles. Take a few instances of St. Paul's usual method in this respect:—after having convinced the Romans of their corruption and misery, he sets before them "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness

for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 24—26. "Therefore," continues he, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 1. To the Corinthians he writes: "Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved, unless ye have believed in vain." 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2. For "ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. vi. 11. "God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 21. To the Galatians: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith, and not by the works of the law." Gal. ii. 16. Before "faith came, we were kept under the law. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ; but after that faith is come, we are no more under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 23—26. To the Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Eph. i. 3, 6, 7. "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. ii. 8, 9. "Finally, my brethren, put on the whole armour of God; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Eph. vi. 10, 11, 16. To the Philippians: "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." Philip. i. 27. "We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Yea, I count all things but loss, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine

own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Philip. iii. 3, 8, 9. To the Colossians: "It pleased the Father that in him" (the Son) "should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable in his sight, if ye continue grounded and settled in the faith." Col. i. 19—23. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Col. ii. 6, 7. To the Thessalonians: "Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith; for God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." 1 Thess. v. 8—10. "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your faith groweth exceedingly." Now, "the Lord shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. Wherefore we pray that our God would fulfil" in you "the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him." 2 Thess. i. 3, 10—12. To Timothy: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. "For God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. ii. 3—6. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up

into glory." 1 Tim. iii. 16. "God hath saved us," (that is to say, hath put us in possession of the same present salvation which the sinful woman experienced, who, while she prostrated herself at the feet of Jesus in faith and prayer, received from him these consolatory sentences:—"Thy sins are forgiven" thee. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Luke vii. 48, 50,) "God hath saved us, not according to our works, but according to his own grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. i. 8—10. To Titus: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to Titus, mine own son after the common faith: grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour," Titus i. 1, 4, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14. "We ourselves were sometimes disobedient; but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs of eternal life." Titus iii. 3—7. To Philemon he writes: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God, hearing of thy faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." Philemon. Thus a persecuted Saviour became the Alpha and the Omega of this great apostle.

In his epistle to the Hebrews he uses the same language. It begins and concludes with Him who is "the beginning and the end" of all things. Rev. xxii. 13. "God," saith he, "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, by whom also he made the worlds. Who, being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hebrews i. 1—3. "It became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of

their salvation perfect through sufferings. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 10, 14, 15. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation." Heb. v. 8, 9. "This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. vii. 24, 25. "Having," therefore, "an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near in full assurance of faith." Heb. x. 21, 22. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ; for by it the elders obtained a good report, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Heb. xi. 1, 2, 33, 34. "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. xii. 1, 2. "Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever." Hebrews xiii. 20, 21.

The same Saviour, whom St. Paul was so anxious to declare in his epistles, he as constantly preached in his sermons. He was no sooner converted, but, "straightway," says St. Luke, "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." Acts ix. 20. Take an abridgment of the first of his sermons, which is left upon record, and which was preached at Antioch in Pisidia. After asserting the fulfilment of that glorious promise which had been anciently given respecting the birth of

our omnipotent Saviour, he cries out, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." For the inhabitants and rulers of Jerusalem, "because they knew him not," nor understood the sense of those prophecies which are read every sabbath-day, have given them their sad completion, by condemning the Lord of life and glory. "Though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they laid him in a sepulchre." But God, after three days, raised him triumphantly from the grave; "and he was seen many days" of his wondering disciples, whom he continued to visit and instruct even after his resurrection, that they might become "his witnesses to the people." And now "we declare unto you, that God hath fulfilled the promise which was made unto the fathers, in that he hath raised up Jesus" from the dead. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Acts xiii. When the cross of Christ and its happy effects are thus faithfully declared, the word of God is never wholly preached in vain. Some, it is true, will always reject, and count themselves "unworthy of everlasting life." Acts xiii. 46. But others will rejoice in the truth, glorifying the word of the Lord; and all those who, by a true poverty of spirit, are disposed for eternal life, shall effectually believe. Acts xiii. 48.

Sometime afterwards St. Paul delivered a sermon in the prison at Philippi, the capital of Macedonia. St. Luke, his historian, has not favoured us with this discourse, but he has transmitted to us the subject matter of it. Despairing sinner, said the apostle to the affrighted jailer, who lay trembling at his feet, "believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." After hearing thus much, the astonished man collected his family together, and the apostle continued his discourse, declaring unto them all "the word of the Lord." Such are the small remains we are able to collect of this excellent sermon. But though we are unacquainted with its several parts, we know that it was attended with the happiest effects; for before the return of day, this converted jailer, snatched from the very brink of destruction, was seen, with all his believing family, rejoicing in God. Acts xvi.

When the same apostle was afterwards appointed to speak before the senate at Athens, he could not, with propriety, set before those unhumiliated philosophers "the mystery of the gospel." Eph. vi. 19. But after bearing a public testimony against their superstition and idolatry, he pressed upon them the necessity of an unfeigned repentance; announcing Christ as an omniscient Judge, that he might afterwards proclaim him as the compassionate Saviour of men. Acts xvii. To the same purpose was that other sermon of his, which was delivered before the tribunal of Felix; when the Roman governor was seen to tremble under the power of an apostle's preaching. Acts xxiv. 25. The little effect produced by these two last-mentioned discourses may be brought as a proof, that the most momentous truths are hidden "from the wise and prudent," while they are "revealed unto babes. Matt. xi. 25.

It was by proclaiming the same mighty Saviour, that St. Stephen obtained for himself the first crown of martyrdom among the Christians. Behold an abridgment of his celebrated apology. "Men, brethren, and fathers," you accuse me of having spoken blasphemously against Moses. But, on the contrary, I publicly acknowledge him as the deliverer of our fathers, and gladly embrace this opportunity of reasoning with you from the character of that favoured prophet. "He" once "supposed" that by certain of his actions, "his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them." But so far were they from understanding any such matter, that one of them thrust him away, crying out, in an insulting

manner, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? This Moses," however, "whom they" thus "refused," was chosen of God, to be their future prince and deliverer. "This is that Moses who said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me;" a prophet whom you will at first reject, as you rejected me; but who, nevertheless, when you shall receive him, will deliver you out of spiritual Egypt, as I once delivered you from the land of bondage, when you gave credence to my word. This promised Saviour has already made his appearance among us, whom ye have rejected to your own condemnation. As our fathers rejected Moses in the wilderness, thrusting him from them, and in their hearts turning back again into Egypt; so you have rejected your greater Deliverer. "Ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers;" ye "who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Acts vii.

That the powerful preaching of the gospel is sometimes made "the savour of death unto death," 2 Cor. ii. 16, is sufficiently clear from the following account. After Stephen had finished this discourse, the hearts of his hearers were transported with rage, insomuch that "they gnashed upon him with their teeth." Meanwhile, the holy martyr continued to proclaim Christ; and, far from being intimidated by their threatenings, looking steadfastly up to heaven, in a kind of ecstasy, produced by the strength of his faith, the vigour of his hope, and the ardour of his love, he cried out, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And while the multitude ran upon him with stones, after committing his own soul to the care of his exalted Saviour, he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Behold an apology, which was looked upon by the preachers of the day as replete with ignorance and fanaticism, though delivered by an

evangelist, who was filled with faith, with power, and with the Holy Ghost !

The same doctrine was preached by the evangelists, who were dispersed abroad by the persecution excited against Stephen, and was followed by the benediction of the Lord. For we find, that some of them, entering into the city of Antioch, spake unto the Grecians there, preaching the Lord Jesus; and “the hand of the Lord was with them,” so that “a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.” Acts xi. 19—21.

We shall go on to select a few proofs, that all the apostles were of one heart in this matter, preaching Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all those who believe in him.

Though St. James professedly wrote his epistle against the error of those who had destroyed the law of charity by an imaginary faith in Christ, yet so far is he from despising the substantial faith of believers, that, as “the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,” he exhorts false brethren to seek after and manifest it by its proper fruits. He even employs a species of irony to point out the necessity of this powerful grace : “Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.” James ii. 18. He intimates, that our faith must be tried by divers temptations, in order to our becoming perfect and entire before God; whence we learn, that, according to his judgment, the perfection of Christians absolutely depends upon the perfection of their faith. James i. 2—4. On this account he exhorts us to ask wisdom in faith. James i. 6. And, lastly, he declares, that the prayer of faith shall be powerful enough to procure health for the sick, and remission for the sinful. James v. 15.

There needs nothing more than an attentive perusal of this epistle to convince us that St. James announces a faith which saves the Christian by producing in him hope, charity, and every good work.

The same doctrine was inculcated by St. Peter, both in his sermons and epistles. Three thousand souls were converted while he cried out, upon the day of pentecost, “Ye men of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved

of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs ; him, being delivered by the determinate counsel of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain ; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he " (who " is the resurrection and the life," John xi. 25) " should be holden of it. This Jesus therefore, being by the right hand 'of God exalted, hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. Therefore let all the house of Israel assuredly know, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now, when the convicted multitude inquired, in their distress, " Men and brethren, what shall we do ?" Peter answered and said, " Repent, and be baptized every one of you," (that is to say, first cordially believe, and then by baptism make a public confession of that faith,) " in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts ii.

His second discourse was to the same effect : " The God of our fathers hath glorified his son Jesus ; whom ye delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye desired a murderer to be granted unto you ; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know : yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts iii. 13—19.

His apology before the council was founded upon the same divine truths. " Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we

must be saved." Acts iv. 10—12. Thus St. Peter, "filled with the Holy Ghost, spake the word of God with boldness, and with great power gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Acts iv. 31, 33. Even after being commanded to speak no more in the name of Jesus, he departed from the council, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for his Master's sake; "and daily in the temple, and in every house, he ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Acts v. 40—42.

The fourth sermon of this apostle perfectly corresponds with the foregoing. This discourse was delivered in the house of Cornelius the centurion, to whom an angel had before revealed that Peter should declare unto him things whereby both himself and his house should be saved. Of all the sermons which have ever been preached, this was perhaps the most effectual; since it is observed, that "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Take an abridgment of this powerful discourse: God hath proclaimed peace "to the children of Israel by Jesus Christ, whom they slew and hanged on a tree." But he, being raised again by the power of God, "commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts x. 36—43.

And, as in his sermons, so also in his epistles, St. Peter was ever anxious to declare salvation through faith in the name of Jesus Christ.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect of God. Blessed be God, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 1 Peter i. 1—5. "It is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobe-

dient, he is made a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." 1 Peter ii. 6—8.

The second epistle of St. Peter was written for the confirmation of the weak, and the establishment of the strong. In the first verse, Christ is represented as the author and finisher of our faith; in the last, the glory of our salvation is expressly ascribed to the same divine person; and these two verses may be given as an abridgment of the whole epistle.

This powerful faith and this adorable Saviour were as constantly proclaimed by the apostle John. Though St. Luke has not transmitted to us any extracts from his discourses, yet his doctrine is sufficiently manifested in his epistles.

"If any man sin," saith this favoured apostle, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 1, 2. "He was manifested to take away our sins. And this is the commandment of God, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John iii. 5, 23. "Whosoever believeth is born of God; whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John v. 1, 4. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may" yet more steadfastly "believe." 1 John v. 13.

"Many deceivers," continues the same apostle in his second epistle, "have entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son." 2 John 7, 9. Here St. John, foreseeing the melancholy revolution that would one day be effected in the church by these antichristian teachers, notwithstanding his natural gentleness, cries out against them with an holy indignation, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth

him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10, 11.

In his third epistle he expresses the utmost joy over Gaius, on account of his steady adherence to the truth; assuring him, that he had no greater joy than to hear that his children continued to walk in the truths of the gospel. He commends his charity toward the people of God, and exhorts him to continue a fellow-helper to the truth by affording an hospitable reception to those who, with a view of spreading that truth, were journeying from place to place.

St. Jude, in his short epistle, writes thus: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Jude 3, 4. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 20, 21.

The concluding book of the new testament abounds with striking testimonies to the foregoing truths, and was added for the consolation of the church in every age. It opens with a sublime elegy, pronounced upon that incomprehensible Saviour who is "the alpha and the omega, the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father for ever and ever." Rev. i. 5, 6.

The faithful, who groan in secret to behold their Master rejected by deists and neglected by the greater part of Christians, attend with holy transport to the representations here given by St. John. Here they perceive that condescending Saviour, who was dishonoured upon earth, acknowledged and adored by the hosts of heaven. They see the prostrate elders, and behold the innumerable multitude of the redeemed assembled before the throne.

They hear that new song of adoration in which angels and the spirits of just men made perfect unanimously cry out, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Rev. v. 12. These are scenes which the believer is assisted to realize, by means of a lively faith, and in which he already bears an humble part, ascribing, with his more exalted brethren, "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Rev. v. 13.

This mysterious book concludes with that short prayer of St. John which shall one day be offered up, with the energy of the Holy Spirit, by ten thousand times ten thousand of the faithful: "Come, Lord Jesus," fully to accomplish thy gracious promises. Rev. xxii. 20.

If it be here inquired, Do not all ministers maintain this scriptural faith? I answer: It is a rare thing with the generality of ministers to treat on a point of so vast importance; and even when they are heard to speak of this mighty grace, they represent it as something manifestly different from that living faith by which we are regenerated. If ever they discourse with their catechumens on this subject, they speak as men who attempt to teach what they have yet to learn. They frequently repeat the word "faith," but are unable to open its spiritual signification. They take it for granted, that all their neighbours are possessed of this grace, except those who openly reject the word of God; and thus they become perfectly satisfied with that species of faith against which St. Paul and St. James were authorized to denounce the anathemas of the gospel. On this account one of the last texts a worldly pastor would make choice of is that solemn exhortation of the apostle: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Christ Jesus is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. The faith with which he contents himself, and which he publishes to others, may be equally possessed by those who are conformable to this

present evil world, and those who "have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24. It belongs to self-exalting pharisees, who boast of their own righteousness, as well as to those humble believers who count themselves unworthy of the benefits they have received.

Further: so far is the ill-instructed minister from preaching the true faith, that he is always prepared to plead against it. In confirmation of this melancholy truth, take the following relation:—A believer, whose circumstances frequently engaged him in conversation with a worldly man of his neighbourhood, once took occasion to offer him such advice as brotherly charity suggested. After the customary civilities, "Sir," said he, "we have lived as neighbours long enough to know one another; and I presume the intimacy of our acquaintance authorizes us to speak to each other without any reserve. It has given me real satisfaction to observe your constant attendance at our church, and your strict attention to her most solemn services. Nevertheless, permit me to express my fears, that you are not yet seeking the kingdom of God with that earnestness and solicitude, without which it can never be obtained. Though you are constant at church, yet you are as constant at tables of festivity; and an approaching entertainment appears to afford you greater pleasure than an approaching sacrament. I regularly observe the Gazette upon your table, with a variety of new and ingenious publications; but I have never found you perusing the sacred pages of a more important volume. I have heard you speak in an agreeable manner upon twenty different things; but cannot recollect that your conversation ever turned upon what our Lord has described as the 'one thing needful.' Luke x. 42. In short, sir, I apprehend, from your conduct, that you are altogether unacquainted with evangelical faith; and if so, your hope is as fallacious as your devotion is pharisaical."

Neighbour.—I am obliged, sir, by the interest you appear to take in my salvation; but allow me to say with Solomon, "There is a time for all things."

Believer.—Yes, sir, for all that is good ; but if you really believe there is a time for all things, is it not amazing that, after you have found four seasons in every day convenient for eating and drinking in your family, you should find no proper opportunity, through the whole course of a week, to pour out your prayers with that family before God ?

Neighbour.—It is true, I do not pique myself upon my piety ; and I will confess to you, that I frequent the church and the holy communion, rather out of decency than choice. But, notwithstanding this, my faith is as orthodox as that of my neighbours. We all believe in God as our Creator, and in Christ as our Redeemer, except some few persons, who glory in trampling all revelation under foot. For my own part, I have never erred from the faith, since I first became acquainted with the apostles' creed ; and that was so early in life, that I cannot now recollect who first instructed me in it.

Believer.—It seems then, neighbour, that you imbibed your faith as you drew in your nurse's milk ; and you have learned to believe in Christ, rather than in Mahomet, because you happened to be taught the English rather than the Turkish language.

Neighbour.—That may be. However, if I had been a Mahometan, I trust I might also have been an honest man. I give to every one his due. This is the grand principle upon which I have always acted ; and from this I leave every rational man to form a judgment of my faith.

Believer.—Ah, sir ! if such are the principles by which your conduct is regulated, then make a full surrender of your heart to God, and consecrate to his service those powers of body and soul which you have received from his bounty, and to which he has so just a title. But, alas ! without piety, your strict justice is like the fidelity of a subject who fulfils his engagements with a few particular persons, while he withholds the homage due to his rightful sovereign. If such a subject can be termed "faithful," then may you with propriety be ac-

counted just, while you offer not to God that tribute of love, gratitude, adoration, and obedience which is your reasonable service. You made a confession but now, that you piqued not yourself upon your piety : it would not have astonished me more had you said, that you piqued not yourself upon paying your debts, and acting with common honesty in the world. Alas ! sir, your boasted principles do but confirm the fears to which your conduct had given rise. I entreat you in the most solemn manner, “ examine yourself, whether you be in the faith.”

Neighbour.—What do you call “ faith ? ”

Believer.—The scriptures teach us, that we must believe with the heart; and that “ faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews xi. 1. He, therefore, who truly believes in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, carries within him a lively demonstration of the Almighty’s presence, which penetrates him with sentiments of fear, respect, and love for a Being so powerful, just, and good ; he possesses an internal evidence of the affection of that Redeemer upon whom alone he grounds his hope of salvation, saluting him, with Nathanael, as “ the Son of God, the King of Israel ; ” John i. 49 ; and he discovers in his own heart the most indisputable testimonies of the sanctifying and consoling operations of the Holy Spirit. Now, from this threefold demonstration, he is enabled to say, with suitable sentiments of gratitude and devotion, “ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John iii. 1. “ He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Eph. i. 6, 7. “ And the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Romans viii. 16. Tell me then, since you boast of having received the Christian faith, have you ever experienced those salutary effects of faith which I have now described ?

Neighbour.— If that demonstration and that lively representation of which you speak are essential to Christian faith, I must confess that to such a faith I am a per-

fect stranger. But the writings of St. Paul, whose definition of faith you have just cited, are generally looked upon as remarkably dark and mysterious : I wish you had rather quoted St. John.

Believer.—I doubt, sir, whether you will gain any thing by such an appeal. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ,” saith St. John, “is born of God. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John v. 1, 4, 5. You perceive, sir, that, according to this apostle, faith is a principle of grace and power sufficiently forcible and victorious to regenerate and make us partakers of the divine nature, enabling us to triumph equally over the most seducing, as well as the most afflicting, occurrences in the world. Have you obtained, or have you even sought, the faith of which such excellent things are spoken?

Neighbour.—You embarrass me. I never heard the least intimation of such a faith in this country.

Believer.—Indeed, sir, you are in an error; since this very faith is plainly set forth in the Helvetic Confession, chapter xvi. “The Christian faith,” say the pious ministers who composed that work, “is not a mere human opinion or persuasion, but a state of full assurance; it not only gives a constant and clear assent to, but also comprehends and embraces, the truths of God, as proposed to us in the apostles’ creed. The soul by this act unites itself to God as to its only, eternal, and sovereign good, and to Jesus Christ as the centre of all the promises.” Have you, then, this divine persuasion, this full assurance, of the truths of our holy religion? And have you experienced this act, by which the soul is united to God, through Christ, as to its sovereign good?

Neighbour.—I have, undoubtedly, a persuasion that the word of God is true; but how may I absolutely determine whether or no I am a possessor of the faith of which you speak?

Believer.—If you are possessed of faith, you have some experimental knowledge of those happy effects of that grace which are thus enumerated in the same Confession :

“True faith restores peace to the conscience. It procures a free access to God, enabling us both to approach him with confidence, and to obtain from him the things we need. It retains us in the path of obedience, enduing us with power to fulfil our several duties both to God and to our neighbour. It maintains our patience in adversity ; and disposes us, at all times, to a sincere confession of our confidence. To sum up all in a single word, it produces every good work. Let it be observed,” says the same Confession, “that we do not here speak of a pretended faith, which is vain, ineffectual, and dead ; but of a living, effectual, and vivifying faith. This is a doctrine which St. James cannot be understood to combat, seeing he speaks of a vain and presumptuous confidence, of which some were known to boast, while they had not Christ living in them by means of faith.”

Neighbour. — “Christ living in them by means of faith !” I pray, sir, what is to be understood by this expression ? I do not comprehend the thing. But, if I recollect, I shall have an opportunity, in a few hours, of mentioning the matter to our pastor, whom I expect here this evening, to make up a party at cards.

The true believer, after thanking his worldly neighbour for the patience with which he had listened to his conversation, took his leave and withdrew, apprehending every evil consequence from the decision of a pastor who was known to indulge a taste for play and vain amusement. His fears were too well founded. The minister, true to his engagement, arrived at the appointed hour, and the gentleman thus eagerly addressed him : “I have been receiving some singular advice from a person of a very unaccountable turn, who appears to agree either with the mystics or the pietists. He spoke much of faith ; asserting that all true Christians are really regenerate, and that they have Christ living in them by faith. What think you, sir, of such assertions as these ?” “I will tell you freely,” replied the minister, “that these abstruse points of doctrine are among those profound mysteries which neither you nor I are appointed to fathom. It is usual with enthusiasts to speak in this manner ; but such

mystic jargon is now out of season. There have been ages in which divines were accustomed to speculate concerning this faith, and publicly to insist upon it in their sermons. But in an age like this, enlightened by sound philosophy and learned discoveries, we no longer admit what we cannot comprehend. I advise you, as a friend, to leave these idle subtilties close shut up in the unintelligible volumes of our ancient theologists. The only material thing is, to conduct ourselves as honest men. If we receive revelation in a general sense, and have good works to produce, there can be no doubt but that our faith is of the proper kind, and highly acceptable before God." To this short discourse the card-table succeeded, which served to strengthen the bands of intimacy between the careless clergyman and his deluded neighbour; so perfectly alike were their faith and their manners.

The circumstances alluded to in the above relation are not imaginary; and there is every reason to fear, that circumstances of the same nature are no less common in other Christian countries, than in that which gave birth to the writer of these pages.

Thus the worldly minister, instead of preaching this important doctrine in its purity, seeks to destroy even the curiosity which would engage an irreligious man to inquire into the necessity, the nature, the origin, and the effects of evangelical faith. And while the generality of those who are required to publish this victorious grace are seen to reject it with contempt, no wonder that the true minister esteems himself obliged to contend for it with increasing earnestness, both in public and in private. Jude 3.

To close this section: when the Christian minister proclaims salvation by faith, he adheres not only to the holy scriptures, but also to those public confessions of faith which are in common use among the churches of Christ. "We believe," say the churches of France, "that everything necessary to our salvation was revealed and offered to us in Christ, who is made unto us 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.'" Article xiii. "We believe that we are made partakers of righ-

teousness by faith alone ; since it is said, that he," Christ, "suffered in order to procure salvation for us, and that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish." Article xx. "We believe that we are illuminated by faith, through the secret grace of the Holy Spirit." Article xxi. "We believe that, by this faith, we are regenerated to newness of life, being by nature in bondage to sin. So that faith, instead of cooling in us the desire of living righteously and godly, naturally tends to excite such desire, and necessarily produces every good work." Article xxii.

Such also is the doctrine of the Helvetic Confession : "We believe, with St. Paul, that sinful man is justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ, and not by the law. Faith receives Jesus, who is our righteousness ; and on this account justification is attributed to faith. That by means of faith we receive Jesus Christ, he himself has taught us in the gospel, where he significantly uses the terms applied to eating for believing ; for, as by eating we receive bodily nourishment, so by believing we are made partakers of Christ." Chapter xv. "Man is not regenerated by faith, that he should continue in a state of indolence, but rather that he should apply himself without ceasing to the performance of those things which are useful and good ; since the Lord hath said, 'Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit.' Matt. vii. 19. 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.' John xv. 5."

The church of England expresses herself in the following terms upon salvation by faith, and the good works produced by that faith : "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." Article xi. "Good works do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit." Article xii.

THE TRUE MINISTER GOES ON TO ANNOUNCE A LIVELY
HOPE.

"GODLINESS with contentment is great gain ;" 1 Tim. vi. 6 ; and the pastor who is possessed of so invaluable a blessing cannot be backward in soliciting all within the circle of his acquaintance to share it with him. Happy in the enjoyment of that precious secret which enables him to rejoice without ceasing, he readily communicates it to the afflicted by leading them to that lively hope which consoles and sustains the heart of every believer.

In a world where the bitterness of evil is continually increasing, where we discover the scourges of a God who will not fail to chastise his rebellious creatures ; where disappointment and death successively deprive us of our dearest comforts ; and where the forerunners of death are continually weakening all our imperfect enjoyments ;—in such a world it is evident that the most exalted pleasure we are capable of must spring from a well-grounded hope of those immortal joys which are reserved for the righteous. The language of mortality is too feeble to describe either the power or the sweetness of such an hope. Here we can only cry out, with the Psalmist, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is," Psalm xxxiv. 8, in providing so potent a cordial for those who are travelling through a vale of tears.

The lively hope which gives birth to a believer's felicity is one of the most exhilarating fruits of his faith, and is inseparably connected with it ; since true "faith is the substance of things hoped for." In proportion as the truths and promises upon which faith is founded are evidenced and apprehended, such will be the hope with which that faith is accompanied. If Moses then, by the faith which he professed, was enabled to renounce the prospect of an earthly crown, with the hope of obtaining a more glorious inheritance ; if he esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, having respect unto the recompence of reward ;" Heb. xi. 26 ; what may not be expected from an hope founded upon those precious promises which have been

sealed with the blood of that condescending Saviour who "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?" 2 Tim. i. 10. "The law," saith the apostle, "made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God." Heb. vii. 19. "Seeing then that we have such hope," continues the same apostle, "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." 2 Cor. iii. 12, 18.

We every day observe the men of the world exulting in the hope of some temporal advantage. The prospect of an honourable title, an augmentation of fortune, an advantageous marriage, or even a poor party of pleasure, is sufficient to allure, to animate, to enrapture them. They will even acknowledge, that the flattering hope of future pleasure is sweeter than enjoyment itself. Who then shall attempt to declare those transports which flow from the lively hope of a triumphing Christian?—a hope which is founded upon the Rock of ages; and which has for its multifarious object, riches, honours, and pleasures, as much superior to those of worldly men as the soul is superior to the body, heaven to earth, and eternity to the present fleeting moment.

The true minister publicly announces this hope to the world; persuaded that, if mankind were once happy enough to possess it, they would exchange a load of misery for a prospect of blessedness. But since he knows that this hope can never be admitted into hearts replete with sin, his first concern is to overthrow the vain confidence of the impenitent, to undermine the presumption of the pharisaical, and to point out the true distinction between a sinner's groundless expectation, and the well-founded hope of a believer in Christ.

In every place there are many to be found who, without evangelical faith or hope, are filled with a presumption as blind as that of the pharisees, and as fatal as that of heathens hardened in their sin. To every such person the true minister uniformly declares, that he is "without Christ," without "hope, and without God in the world." Eph. ii. 12. These very men, it is probable, may offer

to the Deity a formal worship, and indulge high expectations from the mercy of a divine Mediator, though they are totally destitute of an unfeigned "repentance toward God, and" a true "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts xx. 21. Thus far the unconverted may proceed in a seemingly religious course. But the regenerate alone can truly say, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus ii. 11—13.

The hope of unrighteous men is founded upon pride, false notions of the Deity, ignorance of his law, and upon those prejudices which the irreligious communicate one to another. On the contrary, the hope of believers has for its basis the word of him "who cannot lie." Titus i. 2. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime," saith the apostle, "were written for our learning, that we" (the children of God) "through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Rom. xv. 4. It is founded not only upon the word, but equally upon the oath, of God. "Men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie," (namely, his word and his oath,) "we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Heb. vi. 16—19.

When the faithful minister has rooted up every false hope he then announces Jesus Christ, who hath brought in a better hope than that of heathens or Jews. Observe here the reason why those pastors who preach not Christ are incapable of doing any thing toward the furtherance of that living faith of which Christ is the grand object, and that lively hope of which he is the inexhaustible source. "Jesus Christ," saith St. Paul, "is our hope;"

1 Tim. i. 1; and we declare unto you “the mystery which hath been hid from ages,” and is still hidden from worldly men, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Thus the everlasting Son of the Father is made to his true followers the beginning and the consummation of hope, as well as “the author and finisher of faith.” Heb. xii. 2.

By the mercy of God, and through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, the believer has already received the promise of a free pardon for past offences; otherwise he deserves not to be termed a believer; at least, he is destitute of evangelical faith. Now when the believer sincerely receives the glad tidings of redeeming grace, he then assuredly receives Jesus Christ, in whom “all the promises are yea and amen;” 2 Cor. i. 20; and in such circumstances he would conduct himself in a manner contrary to that which both reason and scripture prescribe, if he should refuse to rejoice in God his Saviour. By such a mode of acting, he would prove his want of gratitude for that which Christ hath already done, and of hope for that which he hath promised still to perform. But when he gives himself up to a joy as reasonable as it is refreshing, he then answers the gracious designs of his benevolent Lord. Continually taken up with more satisfactory enjoyments, he despises the seducing pleasures of sin. He carries in his own bosom a source of celestial pleasure, while the man of the world disquiets his heart in the vain pursuit of earthly joys. The difference between the enjoyment of these two characters is as great as betwixt the rational pleasure of those who gather their wheat into the barn, and the puerile mirth of children who are busied in collecting the scattered straws and thorns: the former are securing an inestimable treasure, while the latter have nothing more in view than to dance round a short-lived blaze, the truest emblem of a sinner’s satisfaction.

In the holy scriptures very excellent things are spoken of the hope which produces this sacred joy. 1. It is a divine hope, since it has for its object the enjoyment of God, and because it draws supplies of strength from that Holy Spirit, which discovers to believers the greatness and stability of gospel promises. Thus St. Paul teacheth us,

that "the Father of glory" giveth us "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; enlightening the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what is the hope of our calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints." Eph. i. 17, 18.

2. It gives honour to the faithfulness and power of God. "Abraham, saith St. Paul, against all human probability, believing in "hope, staggered not at the promise, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was also able to perform." Rom. iv. 18, 21. "Therefore, being justified," like Abraham, "by faith, we rejoice," continues the apostle, with a confidence like his, "in hope of the glory of God. And" this "hope maketh not ashamed." Rom. v. 1, 2, 5. How unlike the fallacious hope of worldly men, who are frequently put to shame by their blasted expectations!

3. This hope is said to fill us with a holy joy. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," saith St. Peter, "who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Wherein ye greatly rejoice." 1 Peter i. 3, 6. And on this account it was, that the apostle Paul prayed with so much ardour for an increase of hope among believers. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13.

4. It actually saves us, as St. Paul himself declares in the following words:—"I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And," supported by this sweet persuasion, "we wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For," in this respect, "we are saved by hope." Rom. viii. 18, 23, 24.

5. It is equally sweet and solid, since it rests upon the right which the children of God may claim to the inheritance of their heavenly Father; a sacred right, which is confirmed to them with the utmost solemnity in the new testament. Now every man who receives, with sincerity, the Lord of life and glory, receives with him a title to everlasting possessions, and ranks, from that moment,

among "the sons of God." John i. 12. So that to such, the following passages may, with propriety, be applied :— "He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation : in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." Eph. i. 6, 13—14.

6. It purifies us. "Now are we," saith St. John, "the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever is born of God," or regenerated by a true faith and a lively hope, "doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John iii. 2, 3, 9. The truth of this assertion is clear to the eye of reason. We fall into sin, because we suffer ourselves to be seduced by the allurements of some transitory good, which presents itself either to our senses or imagination. But when we are once persuaded that infinite enjoyments await us, we can then look with contempt upon those deceitful appearances ; and after our hearts are animated with a confident hope of possessing those invisible realities, the charm of sin is broken. In such a state, we break through temptations with as much resolution as a prince, who is going to take possession of a kingdom, renounces the little amusements that occupied his thoughts before they were engrossed by a concern of so vast importance. "Who is he that overcometh the world," but the man who believes with that "faith" which affords him a lively representation of "things hoped for?" Compare 1 John v. 5, with Heb. xi. 1.

7. This lively hope produces charity in the soul. "We give thanks to God," saith the Apostle, "praying always for you, since we heard of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." Col. i. 3—5. Nay, of so prevailing an influence is this solid hope, that the apostle intimates, in

the same chapter, that believers shall be presented before God "holy and unblameable," provided they be not "moved away from the hope of the gospel." Col. i. 22, 23. "For," continues he, "we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Heb. iii. 14. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. vi. 11, 12.

8. This hope is full of consolation. "We who remain," saith the apostle, "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts." 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. When we observe among us some who are disquieted and cast down, who want courage to support affliction without impatience, and to fill up their duties with cheerfulness, we then behold persons who never enjoyed, or who have unhappily lost, the lively hope of true Christians. If all ministers of the gospel had experienced the sweetness and power of this hope, with what pleasure would they publish it to the afflicted! And with what perseverance would they join to their discourses the most ardent prayers, that all their hearers might come to the enjoyment of so invaluable a blessing!

When the true minister leads his flock to this lively and joyful hope, he treads in the footsteps of his divine Master. Christ, it is true, began his ministry by preaching repentance. Matthew iv. 17. But immediately after we find him placing before the believer's eye beatitudes and promises of the most consolatory nature. Matt. v. 1, &c. In a variety of passages, he exhorts his followers to the exercise of a joyful hope in the severest trials, making that an indispensable duty, which is indeed a glorious privilege. "Fear not them, which are not able to kill the soul. The very hairs of your head are

all numbered. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. x. 28, 30, 32. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke xii. 32. "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." John x. 27, 28.

He appears anxious that his people should participate his peace, his consolation, and his confidence, till they come to the possession of consummate blessedness. "These things have I spoken," saith he, "that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but he of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John xvi. 33. "Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John xiv. 1—3. "Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." John xvi. 22. He exhorts them continually to expect his return; Luke xii. 40; and even condescends to mention the very terms in which he will, at that time, salute every waiting believer.

The prayers of Christ, as well as his exhortations and promises, tend to produce and support the most exalted hope in the souls of believers. He has graciously interceded for them; he still continues to make intercession; and his prayer is always prevalent. Mark a few sentences of that memorable prayer which he once offered up for all his followers, and which forms the seventeenth chapter of St. John's gospel: "O Father, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me; and sanctify them through thy truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they may all be one, even as we are one. Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

A lively hope, founded upon these prayers and declara-

tions of the blessed Jesus, enabled the primitive Christians to triumph over every affliction. In the midst of the most terrible persecutions, they could congratulate one another on their common blessedness, and say, "Our life is hid with Christ in God;" and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." Col. iii. 3, 4. For "he shall" yet "come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." 2 Thess. i. 10.

The apostles, agreeably to the example of their divine Master, were unanimous in publishing this glorious hope; and St. Paul very frequently insists upon it as a most important duty. "Let us," saith he, "who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 1 Thess. v. 8. "I beseech you, brethren, present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, rejoicing in hope." Romans xii. 1, 12. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice." Philip. iv. 4. This evangelical hope will ever be experienced as a never-failing source of consolation and thankfulness; and hence wherever the hope of the gospel is preached, there believers continue to be filled with unspeakable joy. Acts xiii. 52. How truly happy would Christians be, were such an hope to flourish among them! Far from disputing any longer for the trifles of time and sense, they would joyfully renounce them all, in expectation of an eternal inheritance; and instead of running to the frivolous amusements of the world for a momentary recreation, every passing day would appear too short for the exhilarating duties of praise and thanksgiving.

It is asserted by many, that this divine hope is usually insisted upon by every minister. That preachers, in general, are accustomed to exhort their hearers, in a cold and languid manner, to hope in the divine mercy, will readily be granted; but that such do not publish the real, evangelical hope of Christians may be easily proved beyond the possibility of a doubt. We have seen, in the preceding sections, that the minister of the present day is unacquainted with this hope; that he is even without any just ideas of that true repentance and that living faith from

which alone this hope can flow ; and hence it is impossible for him, in the nature of things, to publish it in the church of God. In vain has Christ himself declared, that the broad way will conduct multitudes to destruction ; and that “ except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ; ” John iii. 5 ; in spite of these solemn declarations, the worldly pastor still imagines that this very way will conduct him to life, and that he shall be counted among the inhabitants of that kingdom without scriptural regeneration. He supposes, at least, that he is sufficiently sanctified, though his righteousness exceeds not that of the pharisees, nor his devotion that of the Laodicean church. Thus, entertaining a vain hope in his own heart, and indulging a confidence which is repugnant to the concurrent testimonies of every sacred writer, he necessarily leads his hearers into the same dangerous delusions.

As in order solidly to found our hopes upon a benefactor or a surety, it is necessary to have an acquaintance with the person who presents himself in either of these characters, so the lively hope of which we speak must flow from an experimental knowledge of God by Jesus Christ : “ This is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John xvii. 3. But the children of this world, whether they be laymen or ecclesiastics, are destitute of this knowledge. They know neither the Father, nor the Son ; and were it otherwise, the love of the world would not have dominion over them.

This lively hope can never dwell in an unregenerate heart. The child that is not born cannot possibly rejoice in hope of possessing the heritage of his father ; since he is equally unacquainted with his parent, and the patrimony that is likely to be reserved for him. It is therefore absolutely necessary to be born of God, before we can exercise this exhilarating hope. Now, a man is thus born when he is regenerated by that Spirit of adoption which God hath promised to those who sincerely believe in Jesus Christ. But they who are conformable to the maxims of the world are not able to receive this vivifying

Spirit. "I will pray the Father," said Christ to his disciples, "and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but," being already regenerate in part, "ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," when you are fully born of the Spirit. John xiv. 16, 17. It is not till after the accomplishment of this promise has been experienced, that the following expressions can be perfectly understood:—"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" 1 Cor. vi. 19. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Romans xv. 13.

Far from preaching this primitive hope, the worldly minister is alarmed at the bare mention of it. Let it here be observed again, that this celestial plant can flourish only in those hearts where the word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, has cut down every unfruitful appearance of pharisaical hope. Now, when a true minister is engaged in performing this preparatory work, cutting away the mortified members of the old man, and plucking from pride its unprofitable supports, the inexperienced minister preposterously takes offence at his holy zeal, and censures this necessary severity, as leading souls into the horrors of despair. Slow of understanding in spiritual concerns, he comprehends not, that they who recline upon a broken reed must give up all the confidence they foolishly place in so slender a prop before they can effectually choose the Rock of ages for their support.

The true character of these false apostles is not generally known. Covering their impiety with the cloak of religion, they are supposed by many to act on the part of Christ, and are frequently esteemed as pillars in the church. But there are occasions on which they unwittingly throw off the mask, and make an open discovery of their secret thoughts. Some few persons are found in the world who, refusing to attend card assemblies, rejoice to be present in those less polite assemblies which are

formed for the purpose of prayer. Here it is usual for consenting neighbours to take sweet counsel together, and wrestle with ardour for the hope of the gospel in words like these: "Gracious Father! forgive the sins of thy returning children, and grant us an increase of spiritual strength. Sensible of our own unworthiness, assist us to place all our confidence in thine unbounded mercy, manifested through Jesus Christ. Increase our faith in the Son of thy love, and confirm our hope in thine unchangeable promises. O thou divine Saviour! descend this day into our hearts as thou didst once descend upon thy first disciples. Consecrate us thy living temples; fill us with thy graces; and, during the time of our earthly pilgrimage, vouchsafe to lead us with the right hand of thy power. Let not thy Spirit of illumination and holiness, thy Spirit of consolation and joy, abandon us for a moment, as we pass through this valley of tears. May its potent operations subdue in us the power of sin, and produce in our outward conversation the happy fruits of righteousness, peace, and joy. Permit us at this time to return to our houses with a consciousness of thy love, and an assurance of thy favour; and grant that, after having been the temples of thy Spirit upon earth, we may one day be received into the temple of thine eternal glory in the heavens."

A worldly minister, on a certain time, entering into an assembly of this kind, heard the prayer of these humble believers; and, as much surprised to see the ardour with which they offered their petitions, as to observe the time and place in which they were presented, withdrew from their society with as much indignation as a good pastor would retire from a company of jugglers. But having understood that one of his own parishioners was of the religious party, he took the earliest opportunity of testifying the utmost disapprobation of his conduct. "What was it," said he, "that you was doing with those people the other day in such a place? Conventicles of that kind are contrary to order, and unworthy of toleration. The church is the only proper place for the performance of divine worship. Moreover, I heard you foolishly praying

for I know not what consolation, light, and power of the Holy Spirit. Receive in good part the advice I offer you :—Look upon inspirations and illuminations of this sort, as no other than the idle fancies of visionaries and enthusiasts ; renounce the imaginary assurance with which you do but deceive yourself, and repose upon the hope which I have constantly preached to you,—a hope with which you and your neighbours may very well rest contented.” Confounded with a discourse of this kind, a weak and inexperienced Christian might have been drawn aside from the narrow path of truth. But the person here alluded to, by citing Ephesians i. 17, 18, was enabled to prove, that the very same illumination and power which were treated so contemptuously by his opponent were, nevertheless, absolutely necessary as the groundwork of a solid hope. Nay, he pushed the matter still further, and asserted, that the prayer against which the zealous pastor had so angrily exclaimed, was used in exact conformity to those very petitions which he himself was inconsistently heard to offer at the feast of pentecost, and on other solemn seasons.

If this little relation faithfully describes the manner of thinking which is too common among the clergy of the day, is it not evident, that they are more disposed to ridicule, than to preach, the Christian hope ; and abundantly more earnest to obstruct than to further their parishioners in the pursuit of everlasting blessedness ?

When the dawn of this glorious hope first began to glimmer ; when, at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole company of the disciples began to praise God with a loud voice, strewing the way by which their Lord was to pass with garments and branches of trees, and crying out before him, “Hosanna to the Son of David ; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord ; hosanna in the highest !” some of the pharisees who had mixed among the multitude rudely exclaimed, “Master, rebuke thy disciples.” And when he had entered into the temple, “the chief priests and scribes,” (those models by which the generality of ministers seem anxious to form themselves,) “seeing the wonderful things

that he did, and the children crying Hosanna, were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say?" And Jesus answered them, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Matt. xxi.; Luke xix. There still exists the same opposition betwixt those who cordially embrace the gospel and those who ungratefully reject it. As often as the former are perceived to give a loose to the transports of their gratitude, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, the worldly minister, displeased to observe any thing that appears to reproach his own lukewarmness, is prepared to stifle the emotions of that joyful hope which he deems no better than the confidence of presumptuous fanatics. While the faithful minister, on observing such a scene, cries out, in imitation of the great apostle, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

If penitents are not pointed to the blessedness of this hope, they will strive like Cain to stifle their remorse by passionately abandoning themselves to the business and enjoyments of the present world; or, like the Israelites, who found not sufficient pleasure in religion to banish the recollection of Egypt's vanities, they will indulge that spirit of trifling which the apostle thus describes: "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." 1 Cor. x. 7. On the contrary, when the Christian is directed to the hope of his high calling, he finds it a source of unutterable consolation: and having discovered the treasure hidden in the gospel field, "for joy thereof he selleth his all," in order to purchase that field. He now renounces without pain what before had hindered him in running the heavenly race; counting nothing dear to himself, that he may finish his course with joy, and ensure the crown of everlasting life. So powerfully were the first Christians supported by this gospel hope, that they remained immoveable amid the sorest calamities of life, and suffered death itself with a courage that astonished the persecutors. But when they lost their

confidence, like Demas, they began to indulge the fond hopes and foolish fears of the present world, becoming altogether weak as other men : and such are the generality of Christians at this day. The love of many is waxing cold, while the church of God is evidently falling into ruins ; and how shall we assist to rekindle that love, or repair that church, but by zealously proclaiming abroad the hope of the gospel ?

THE TRUE MINISTER PREACHES CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

If the evangelical pastor proclaims repentance, faith, and hope, it is with a view of leading sinners to that Christian charity which is justly esteemed the crown of every grace. In preaching repentance, he lays the axe to the root of every corrupt tree. In publishing evangelical faith, he plants the tree of life. When he proclaims the hope of the gospel, he causes that tree to put forth a beautiful blossom ; but when he preaches Christian charity, he calls forth the rich fruit from every vigorous branch. And while he is engaged in performing the various parts of this important work, he denounces the anathemas of the gospel against that repentance, faith, and hope which are superficial, unfruitful, and delusive.

The minister of the day piques himself upon preaching morality ; which he is ordinarily accustomed to do in the manner of an heathen philosopher. Unacquainted with the importance and power of the doctrines of Christianity, he is ashamed to walk in the traces of St. Paul. If he is enabled to paint, with any degree of ability, the serpents of envy, the inquietudes of avarice, and the delights of charity, he imagines that he shall readily dispose his neighbours to love as brethren. He knows not that “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” is that alone which can make any man “free from the law of sin and death,” by delivering him from that envy, that avarice, that ambition, that indifference, and those worldly fears which are incompatible with evangelical charity. “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,” (that is, our degenerate nature, which has need of stronger motives and more powerful supports than those which the law proposes,) “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sin-

ful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh : that," by the new motives and the divine assistance offered in the gospel, "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who," being regenerate, "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 3, 4.

The judicious pastor, observing the same connexion between the morals and doctrines of Christianity, as between the root and fruit of a vigorous tree, is constrained incessantly to preach those important truths which naturally give rise to the three first-mentioned graces; and he is perfectly assured, that wherever these truths are permitted to take root, he shall shortly rejoice over the inestimable fruits of Christian charity. This mode of acting is equally conformable to reason and revelation. By publishing those doctrines upon which the necessity of repentance is founded, he exterminates pride and inordinate self-love, which are the greatest obstacles to charity. By preaching the doctrines of faith, he gives rise to that universal love which extends to God and man. Thus, when a sinner sincerely believes that "God is love;" 1 John iv. 16; when, penetrated with admiration and gratitude, he can say, with the apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;" Gal. ii. 20; at that moment, he necessarily feels a degree of affection toward the creating Father and the redeeming Son, whom he longs to imitate, and whom he rejoices to obey. This love is as boundless as it is ardent, and reaches to the most unworthy of his fellow-creatures, enabling him, after the example of Christ, to sacrifice for his very enemies, not only outward comforts, but even life itself. Hence the Christian faith is said to work by love. Now if this lively persuasion of the unspeakable blessings which God hath already given us in Christ Jesus is sufficient to produce in the soul a high degree of scriptural charity, it is evident, that a well-grounded hope of greater blessings still to come must necessarily serve to quicken and increase this charity. And if we are fully persuaded, that our labours of love shall never be forgotten; that even a cup of cold water, imparted for the love of Christ, shall not go unrewarded; how vast an influence may such a

hope be expected to exert, in opening the heart to universal benevolence, and in producing all the fruits of evangelical love?

Convinced, that to plead for charity, without insisting upon the doctrines by which it must be supported, would be building a house without laying a solid foundation, the true minister industriously labours to explain the nature, to exhibit the motives, and represent the effects, of this wondrous grace, in the clearest manner. To some, indeed, such discourses are vain; but others among his hearers are found, who, ravished with the loveliness of this virtue, and constrained by those motives which the gospel proposes, betake themselves to the exercise of it, with as much ardour as the voluptuous run to their sensual entertainments.

Darkness differs not more from light than the charity of the faithful minister differs from that of a scribe ill instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom. The love of the good pastor "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;" 1 Cor. xiii. 6; which frequently comes to humble human pride. On the contrary, the charity which every false apostle preaches is no more than the phantom of a virtue, consoling the heart in the midst of sin, rejoicing in a lie, and resting upon assurances altogether contrary to the word of God. To be charitable is, according to the notions of these men, to indulge a persuasion, that there is much to be abated of the threatenings contained in the gospel; and that St. Paul is far beside the truth when he declares, that "no unclean or covetous person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ." Eph. v. 5. It is to believe, that the Holy Spirit was too severe, when it dictated to St. James, that "he who is a friend of the world, is the enemy of God," and violates his baptismal vow in as full a sense as adulterers violate the sacred vow of conjugal fidelity. James iv. 4. It is to insinuate, that Christ himself overpassed the bounds of reason, when he publicly cried out, "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Matt. v. 22. "Judge not," saith the Redeemer, "that ye be not judged." Matt. vii. 1. But, according to the sentiments of these erring guides, to be divinely

charitable, is to conclude from this precept, that a man may even revoke the judgments of Christ himself: thus, under pretext of not judging those who are evidently walking in the road to perdition, they indirectly give judgment against the Redeemer as bearing a false testimony. In errors like these it is that the world will needs have the greatest part of charity to consist.

The true minister attacks this false grace as an enemy to the truth of the gospel, while he pleads for that Christ-like charity which may properly be called the sister of truth. He asserts the dignity and power of truth, holding it up to the veneration and love of those who would not wilfully offend the God of truth. Let us, continues he, "speaking the truth in love, grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ;" Eph. iv. 15; and, having first "purified our souls in obeying the truth," let us "love one another with a pure heart fervently." 1 Peter i. 22. Between these scriptural companions he will suffer no separation to take place, and when they are treated by the injudicious as enthusiastic and heretical, he will dare to stand forth in defence of these two confederate virtues.

Another opinion that generally prevails among the professors of Christianity is, that charity consists in giving alms to the poor; and this opinion is earnestly contended for by many, although the pharisees, who were regarded by our Lord as "serpents and vipers," Matt. xxiii. 33, through their want of an unfeigned charity, were yet remarkable for their generosity in almsgiving. St. Paul manifestly opposes this erroneous notion, where he declares, that it is possible for a man to "give all his goods to feed the poor," and yet be destitute of charity. 1 Cor. xiii. 3. The faithful pastor, it is true, maintains, that every charitable person is constrained to assist the poor according to his ability: but he adds, that almsgiving is as uncertain a mark of charity, as a constant attendance upon the sacramental table is an equivocal evidence of faith; since it is as possible to relieve the poor through weakness or vanity, as to receive the holy communion through timidity or custom.

If the charity of worldly men is ever found to exceed this description, yet it will always be limited to the necessities of the body. As they know not how far the immortal spirit is superior to the perishing body, which must soon be blended with the dust of a thousand carcases, it is no wonder that their chief concern is engrossed by the latter. The welfare of their own souls is attended to with a very small degree of solicitude ; and while this is the case, it cannot be imagined, that they should manifest any extraordinary degree of affection toward the souls of their neighbours. They behold without sorrow those deluded partisans who make war upon each other for the sake of their particular errors ; they can even gaze without pity upon those obdurate souls who are desperately plunging from one abyss of sin to another. How different were the feelings of David, when, like a true penitent, he not only wept for his own offences, but shed torrents of tears for those who transgressed the law of God ! Psalm cxix. 136. And how contrary was the character of St. Paul, who went through a kind of spiritual travail, till the degenerate were born again ! Gal. iv. 19. In like manner the primitive Christians exposed themselves to imminent dangers, that they might give proofs of the most exalted charity, by snatching souls from sin and death. And when they were not able to effect this by their external labours, they then wrestled in their closets, with secret prayers and tears for the conversion of the ungodly. Where there is no desire after the salvation of others, there Christian charity is unknown ; since, while a man disregards the soul of his neighbour, all the interest he takes in his temporal affairs can manifest no more than the charity of a disciple of Epicurus, which is as far below the charity of Christ's disciples, as materialism is inferior to Christianity.

In opposition to all the erroneous notions which too generally prevail upon this important subject, the minister of the new testament teaches, that evangelical charity is the image of God, and that eternal and infinite charity is nothing less than God himself. One apostle declares, that "God is love ;" and another assures us, that we are called to be made "partakers of the divine nature ;" 2 Peter i. 4 ; whence the sacred

preacher infers, that the "new creature" of which St. Paul makes mention, 2 Cor. v. 17, must necessarily consist in charity. When a Christian is filled with charity, he is then regenerate and born of God. Christ is then formed in his heart, the Holy Spirit rests upon him, and he is "filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians iii. 16, 19. He keeps the first commandment of the law, by making a full surrender of his heart to God, from a consciousness that he is in himself the sovereign good: but he chiefly loves him in the person of Christ, through whom the Father is pleased peculiarly to shine forth, as a God of love. In a secondary sense, he loves the works of God in all their wonderful variety, as they shadow forth his matchless perfections, and place them within the reach of man's understanding. And his esteem for these admirable productions is in proportion to the nearer or more distant relation in which they stand to that eternal wisdom which formed them all. Guided by this principle, he loves all mankind with an extraordinary degree of affection. The soul of man is peculiarly dear to him, because created in the image of God, and redeemed with the blood of his beloved Son; while, as the organized vehicle of the soul, he admires and loves the perishable body. As the souls of the poor and the rich are equally immortal, he is never meanly prejudiced in favour of the latter; but, on the contrary, is ever ready to prefer a poor and pious beggar, before a sensual and supercilious noble. Thus the true Christian cherishes the faithful, not only for love of the Creator and Redeemer, but also for love of the sanctifying Spirit, unto whom their souls are consecrated as living altars, and their bodies as hallowed temples. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. From this divine charity good works of every kind proceed, as from an inexhaustible fountain, a fountain which is making, as it were, continual efforts to enrich the barren soil around it. But where this is wanting, all external appearances are without any real value; the lavish giver loses his worth before pious men, and the zealous martyr his reward before a righteous God.

Uniting in his own heart the love of God with the love

of his neighbour, the true minister anxiously endeavours to demonstrate the folly of those who seek to separate these kindred virtues. He maintains, that charity without piety is but a mere natural virtue, which discovers itself as frequently in the brute creation as among unregenerate men. Thus the swallow and the bat are careful of their young, the beaver and the ant are observed to labour for the respective societies of which they are individuals, and the she-bear is ready to meet death in defence of her cubs. On this account, the good pastor furnishes his flock with those exalted motives to love, which, by imparting an evangelical principle to natural charity, ennoble it in man, and render it divine.

As charity without piety is no more than a natural virtue, and may be the effect of pharisaical or diabolical pride, so devotion without brotherly love is to be considered as a species of hypocrisy. This our Lord himself teaches in the following passage :—"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift," which would otherwise be rejected as an abomination by the God of love. Matthew v. 23, 24. True charity embraces all men, because, being made of one blood, they compose but one vast family, of which God himself is the great parent. And here our Lord permits us not to except even our most cruel enemy. "Ye have heard," saith he, "that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and," manifesting a concern for their souls, as well as an attention to their persons, "pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good." Matt. v. 43—45.

Charity consists of two parts, patience and benevolence. By the one we suffer every kind of indignity, without entertaining a thought of revenge ; and by the other we heap upon our enemies unsolicited favours. Our adorable

Master, whose conduct has furnished us with examples of the most perfect charity, discovers to us the extent of this virtue in the following passages :—"The world hath hated both me and my Father." John xv. 24. Nevertheless, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. "It hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" and the time is coming when it shall be said, A thrust with the sword for an abusive word, a pistol-shot for a satirical expression: "but I say unto you, Resist not," according to the maxims of those by whom you are evil entreated; "but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," that is, suffer two insults rather than revenge one. Follow the same rule, likewise, with respect to your worldly substance; "and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also;" that is, far from exacting with rigour, be ready to remit much of thy right for the maintenance of peace, since it is better to suffer a double injustice, than to lack condescension and charity. "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain;" that is, merely yielding to others in things that are good or indifferent is not enough, thy charity should rather prevent and surprise them with unexpected acts of civility and kindness. From these expressions it appears, that our Lord would have his disciples to possess a charity, not only extraordinary in some degree, but altogether divine. In point of quality, he requires that it should be equal to the inexpressible love of the Father, as a drop taken from the ocean is of the same nature with those mighty waves that roll over the unfathomable deep. "If ye love them," saith he, "that love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect" in charity, "even as your Father which is in heaven." Matthew v.

Faith, unspeakably excellent as it is, would be void of any real worth, unless it produced this happy disposition. "In Christ," saith the apostle, "the whole body" of the faithful, "fitly joined together, and compacted by that

which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Ephesians iv. 15, 16. "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision avail-eth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." Gal. v. 6. "And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 2. This celestial grace runs through the whole circle of Christian virtues. Thus when St. Paul enumerates the fruits or effects of the Spirit, he points to charity as the foremost of the train; and when St. Peter recounts the virtues which a Christian should add to his faith, he concludes with the finishing graces of "brotherly kindness and charity." Gal. v. 22; 2 Peter i. 7. Both these ideas are afterwards united by the great apostle, where he exhorts the Colossians to "put on charity," as "that bond of perfectness," Col. iii. 14, without which the Christian character would be incomplete, and which may be said to include all the graces of the Spirit, as a thousand ears of corn are united in the same sheaf by one common band.

It was with these sublime views of charity that St. Paul thus addressed his converts: "By love serve one another; for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Gal. v. 13, 14. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another," in obedience to Christ's command, "hath fulfilled the law." Rom. xiii. 8. "Charity never faileth;" inasmuch as it is the source of heavenly joy. "Now," in the church militant, "abide faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity," which shall eternally animate the church triumphant. 1 Cor. xiii. 8, 13.

Even here on earth it is counted as the beginning of eternal life, to know by faith that "God is love," and that he seeks to gain our affections by blessings without number. John xvii. 3. A discovery of this kind cannot but give rise to some grateful return in the soul, since it is impossible firmly to believe these ravishing truths without crying out, like the first Christians, "We love him

because he first loved us." 1 John iv. 19. If God has mercifully made the first advances toward his rebellious creatures; if, notwithstanding the distance between him and us be infinite, and the obstacles to our union innumerable, he yet graciously presents himself, in spite of all, within our reach; if he yet inclines to pardon the guilty, and endeavours to reconcile the world unto himself by Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. v. 18; what conscious heart can be unaffected with these tokens of his love, or what tongue be silent in his praise?

This God of charity thus affectionately addressed an ancient class of his servants: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Jer. xxxi. 3. The favour here expressed toward the Jewish church is great; but that which is testified by the same adorable Jehovah to the Christian church is still more astonishing. His Son, the living and eternal image of his Father, humbles himself to the dust, and invests himself with our nature, that, raising us from our low estate, he may at length place us at the right hand of the Majesty on high. "He loved the church," saith St. Paul, "and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. v. 25—27. Thus he has given to believers an example of the love which they ought to entertain for all their Christian brethren, and to husbands a pattern of the attachment they should feel to their wives; since he left the bosom of his Father for the very purpose of suffering with and for his church, which, in the language of scripture, is called his "spouse." Rev. xix. 7. But, adds the apostle, "this is a great mystery." Eph. v. 32. Now the true minister is happily initiated into this grand mystery of charity. He can say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;" he can testify with Paul, "The love of Christ constraineth me;" and, at other times, when the emotions of his heart are too tender for utterance, tears of gratitude and joy silently cry out, like those of dissolving Mary, "Lord, thou art worthy of all my love, since thou hast graciously par-

doned all my sin." Animated with this love, he publicly insists upon universal charity with all the ardour of St. John; testifying, that it flows from the knowledge of God, and must be considered as the root of Christian obedience. "Hereby," saith he, "perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but," according to the example of Christ, "in deed and in truth;" 1 John iii. 16, 18; for, "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." And remember, "he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." 1 John iv. 11, 8.

Although Christ evidently came to break down the wall of separation between the Jews and gentiles, by preaching the doctrine of universal charity; yet he willed, that believers should love one another with a peculiar degree of affection. We are required to meet the unregenerate with a love of benevolence; but believers should be bound to each other by ties so tender and powerful, that the world may acknowledge them to be men of one heart and one soul. "By this," saith our Lord, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 35. And who can describe the generosity, the sweetness, the strength, and the constancy, of this enlivening grace? It is more active than the penetrating flame; it is stronger than death. "The communion of saints" is received among Christians as a sentence in their established creed: happy would it be did it constitute a part of their religious experience! As to the difference betwixt Christian charity, and that which was required under the law, it seems to be satisfactorily pointed out by St. John in the following passage:—"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning;" for Moses himself earnestly exhorted his people to maintain among themselves the holy fire of fraternal love. "Again, a new commandment I write unto you;" 1 John ii. 7, 8; new in relation to Christ, who hath loved us not only as himself, but even more than himself, since he offered up his life a ransom for the rebellious. Moses tasted not of

death for Pharaoh, as Jesus did for Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas. The Christian Legislator alone requires a charity of this perfectly disinterested nature; and for the support of so exalted a precept he has seconded it with his own great example. "Herein is love," continues the apostle, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Love," then, "is," undoubtedly, "of God," flowing from him as from an inexhaustible spring; "and he that loveth," after the same pure and fervent manner, "is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John iv. 7, 10.

This charity is set forth by St. Paul as a source of consolation. "If," saith he to the Philippians, "there be any comfort in love, be ye like-minded, having the same love" one to another; and "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. ii. 1, 2, 5. And in another epistle he cries out, "I have a great conflict for them at Laodicea, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love." Col. ii. 1, 2.

1. Charity may be considered as a spring of comfort, because it frees us from the fear of death, and delivers us from a thousand other terrors which trouble the peace of worldly men. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love," hoping all things, "casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He," therefore, "that feareth is not made perfect in love." 1 John iv. 18.

2. Charity is consoling, because it assists and encourages us in the discharge of our several duties. When we glow with affection to God and our neighbour, works of piety and charity are performed, not only without pain, but with heart-felt sensations of secret delight. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and" to those who sincerely love him, "his commandments are not grievous." 1 John v. 3. Thus a tender mother loses her repose without repining, that she may attend to the wants of her restless infant; thus, an affectionate father labours with pleasure for the support and education of his children; and thus, with every testimony of joy, the primitive Christians relieved and supported one another. The admirable effects produced by this unfeigned love are

described by St. Luke in the following terms :—"The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul ; neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed was his own ; but," losing sight of every self-interested view, "they had all things common." Acts iv. 32.

Here we behold that eminently accomplished by Christ, which was anciently prefigured under Moses in the desert, when the manna was so equally distributed among the people, that "he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack." Exodus xvi. 18. Happy were these fleeting days of Christian fellowship ! days that had long been promised by God, and of which a foretaste had been given in the land of Canaan, when it was ordained that, during the year of jubilee, the poor should be permitted to share the comforts of their richer neighbours. It must be allowed, that a multitude of insincere professors, overspreading the church in these melancholy times, will not permit this method to be generally adopted among us, which would, nevertheless, be entirely practicable in a country inhabited by the affectionate followers of Jesus. But, at the same time, it is no less true, that every individual who is possessed of real charity is still treading in the steps of his elder brethren, and waiting only the return of favourable times to prove, that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ;" Heb. xiii. 8 ; and that unfeigned charity, in the same circumstances, will ever produce the same effects.

It is impossible too highly to exalt this charity which springs from a grateful sense of the redemption that is in Jesus. He who is unacquainted with this grace is a stranger to every real virtue, and utterly destitute of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. 14. Hence we find the apostle Paul so frequently connecting holiness with love ; or rather, pressing the latter, as the ground of the former. "God," saith he, "hath chosen us in Christ, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Eph. i. 3, 4. Let "Christ dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in

love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 17—19. "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men; to the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God." 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.

"Knowledge" alone "puffeth up; but charity," added to knowledge, "edifieth," 1 Cor. viii. 1, and conducts the soul from grace to grace, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. iv. 13. Happy they who have attained to this high degree of spirituality, from which, with a look of pure beneficence, they can smile on all around them! Such may join the first professors of Christianity, and say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us;" and, penetrated with a deep sense of his affection, we declare from happy experience, that "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iv. 16. The love of these persevering disciples may, in a scriptural sense, be termed "perfect;" since it enables them to bear a just though faint resemblance to the God of love. 1 John iv. 17. Their hearts are as replete with charity, as sparks are filled with fire; and doubtless the smallest spark may be said to shine with a degree of perfection in its little sphere, as well as the brighter sun in his more boundless course.

St. Paul, who preached this charity with so extraordinary a degree of fervour, declares, that it was kindled in his heart by the love of Christ; and upon this account he labours to found it upon those doctrines which are universally despised by every class of deists. In his epistle to the Romans, which contains sixteen chapters, he employs eleven in laying this solid foundation, while the duties of charity are declared only in the five remaining chapters. Like a wise master-builder, before he attempts to raise this sacred edifice, he endeavours to remove out of the way the ruins of corrupted nature, and the rubbish of self-love. But had he endeavoured to do this, without calling in to his aid the doctrines of the gospel, he would have acted as ridiculously

as Archimedes, had that philosopher attempted the removal of the earth, without having first secured a solid footing suited to his purpose.

The most powerful motives employed by this apostle, in urging us to the practice of Christian charity, are the love of God, and the compassion of Christ. "God," saith he, "commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" Rom. v. 8; and, "ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. viii. 9. Now, whoever is sensible of the power, and tastes the sweetness, of these two grand truths, feels himself, at the same time, carried to every good work, in the same manner as the miser is led to those actions which serve to increase his hoard. For, "being saved by grace through faith" in these very truths, "we are created by Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. ii. 8, 10. "Who gave himself for us," on this sole account, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14. The consolatory doctrine of a gratuitous pardon offered to sinners, as a token of God's unfathomable love, is another motive frequently made use of to the like purpose. "Put on," continues the same apostle, "as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Col. iii. 12, 13. "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." 1 Peter iv. 8. Yes, it not only covers the sins of others, by considering their doubtful actions in the most favourable point of view, and by overlooking the most unpardonable of their failings; but may, in some measure, be said to cover our own offences, since God, for Christ's sake, has promised to overlook our transgressions, as we give proof of a forgiving temper toward our brethren. Discord entered into the world by sin. Hence we see unregenerate men not only separated from God, but divided among themselves; and

hence, by the rebellion of his growing passions against his enfeebled reason, every unrighteous man is at war with himself. Dreadful as these evils are, we are here presented with a perfect remedy for them all. He who created man upright hath sent his Son to re-establish harmony in the world, to reduce our passions under the dominion of universal benevolence, to subject our reason to the authority of truth, and to bring the whole man under the sweet yoke of divine charity manifested in the flesh ; that charity which is destined to reign for ever, and whose happy empire is called the “ kingdom of heaven.” “ The Father of glory,” says St. Paul, “ hath put all things under the feet of Christ, and hath given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians i. 17, 22, 23. “ Ye, who sometimes were far off, are now made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace,” between Jews and gentiles, between man and man, “ who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, that he might reconcile both unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity” by that perfect charity of which he gave so many wonderful proofs. “ Now therefore” we, who are actuated by the same spirit of love, “ are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. In whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord : in whom also ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit” of charity. Eph. ii. 13—22.

The minister who feels the force of these constraining motives, cannot fail to place them continually before his hearers. The various parts of his public discourses as naturally incline to this grand point, as the several parts of a solid edifice mutually rest upon the common foundation. “ There is one body,” saith he, with the apostle, “ and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Eph. iv. 4—6. “ As we

have many members in one body, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Let love be," therefore, "without dissimulation; be kindly-affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good." Rom. xii. 4—21. In a word, "let all your things be done with charity." 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

To conclude: the evangelical pastor points out the excellence of charity, and urges every motive that can lead to the practice of it, till worldly men are constrained to cry out, with all the admiration of the ancient heathens, "See how these Christians love one another!" Lucian, indeed, could look with ridicule upon the zeal with which the primitive Christians succoured one another: "For," says he, "their Legislator has made them believe that they are all brethren; and hence they have all things common among them, despising even death itself, through the hope of immortality." The good pastor, however, is anxious to do that which this heathen writer was impious enough to censure in Christ. He admonishes believers to address the Almighty as their common parent, Luke xi. 2, conscious that so soon as they receive power to cry, "Abba," that is, "Father," by the Holy Spirit, they will necessarily forget every scrupulous distinction between mine and thine, and put up with unfeigned sincerity that universal prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." This petition is commonly used by every member of our degenerate church, while their hearts are comparatively insensible to the wants of their necessitous brethren. But was the love of ancient days to revive among us, we should not only solicit common blessings from above, but rejoice to share them with each other, as brethren partake of a repast provided for them at the table of their common parent.

Happy days, when the gospel of Christ was seen to flourish in the earth! Surely that sacred season might

with propriety be termed "the golden age of the church." O that we could recal the felicity we have forfeited, and see the joys of unanimity restored to a distracted world ! But while we give vent to our lamentations, let us not sink into despair, since, however deplorable our present circumstances may be, they are not totally remediless. Though for so many ages self-love has usurped the throne of charity ; though mankind are prone to injure one another in their reputation by slander, in their property by injustice, and in their persons by murder, whether perpetrated in the character of an assassin, or that of a duellist ; though wars are fomented on the slightest pretences, and Christian princes appear eager to wash their hands in the blood of thousands ; though "all the earth is full of darkness and cruel habitations ;" Psalm lxxiv. 20 ; yet will we not give up our hope. These unhappy times were foretold by our gracious Master. Matt. xxiv. 12. And as he had prescience enough to predict the decays of Christian love, and the calamities consequent thereupon, so he is possessed of sufficient power to re-establish the empire of charity in the world. Believers, then, amid all their afflictions, may patiently and confidently expect those "times of refreshing" which "shall" assuredly "come from the presence of the Lord," looking forward to that promised "restitution of all things," concerning "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts iii. 19, 21. In the mean while, let those who are hastening by their prayers this desirable revolution be careful to preserve in their own hearts those sparks of charity which shall one day kindle the universe into a sacred flame. And let the ministers of the gospel make a constant display of those evangelical truths which were formerly sufficient to light up this glorious fire, that, by stirring up the dying embers of grace, the little light which still remains in the church may be preserved from total extinction.

Should it be here objected, "Are not all the ministers of our church to be considered as preachers of Christian charity?" we answer: By no means ; the charity concerning which we speak must flow from a union with

Christ, a union which ministers of the present day are accustomed to treat as enthusiastic and vain. This excellent grace—"is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Romans v. 5. But he who dares openly to plead for this scriptural truth is esteemed by such pastors no better than a deluded fanatic. These insincere preachers are frequently heard, indeed, to speak of Christian charity; but far from endeavouring to spread it through the world, they use every effort to destroy the very seeds of this grace in the church of God. If in a parish that is unhappy enough to have a pastor of this kind a few persons are happily converted to God, and united together in Jesus Christ; if, having one heart and one soul, they frequently join together in prayer and in praise, mutually exhorting and provoking one another to love and good works; the worldly minister, instantly alarmed, imagines that these persons, for the sake of forming a new sect, are destroying the unity of the church, when, on the contrary, they are but just about to experience "the communion of saints." And if he is possessed of zeal, or party-spirit, he will labour to make it appear, that these Christians who are beginning to "love as brethren," are forming conventicles to disturb the order both of church and state. Such a minister will give encouragement to companies of jugglers, dancers, and drunkards, rather than tolerate a society which has Christian charity for its object and its basis.

END OF FIFTH VOLUME.

